



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

Thursday, 28th April 2022

At

6.30pm

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

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



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DATE AND TIME: Thursday, 28th April 2022, at 6.30 pm

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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

To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:

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

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

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AGENDA

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

Purpose:

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

- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 and 5 April 2022 (Pages 7 - 24)**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meetings and recoded actions held on 15 February 2022, and 5 April 2022, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

Purpose:

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

- 5. Receipt of Announcements**

Purpose:

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

6. Issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee

Recommendation:

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

7. Questions from Members under Standing Order 30

Purpose:

To receive any questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

8. Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44

Purpose:

To receive any notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

9. Recommendations of Committees

Recommendation:

Item 15, Adoption of Fire Authority Member Code of Conduct was recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 23 March 2022.

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

Purpose:

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

11. Build Environment Presentation

Purpose:

To receive an update on the Built Environment Programme.

12. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives (EDI) and Presentation (Pages 25 - 72)

Purpose:

To agree the new proposed Objectives detailed at 3.8 of the report be adopted and published.

13. Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Consultation Results - Summary Report and Presentation (Pages 73 - 132)

Purpose:

To note and conscientiously consider the results of the consultation, and agree

officers' recommendation to adopt Option A.

14. Annual Plan 2022/23 (*Pages 133 - 164*)

Purpose:

To approve the Annual Plan 2022/23 for publication.

15. Adoption of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Member Code of Conduct (*Pages 165 - 206*)

Purpose:

To agree the adoption of the Fire Authority Member Code of Conduct.

16. Immediate Detriment Framework (*Pages 207 - 220*)

Purpose:

To agree not to adopt the Immediate Detriment Framework for Category 2 members at this time.

17. 2022/23 Corporate Calendar (*Pages 221 - 226*)

Purpose:

To agree the 2022/23 Corporate Calendar, and to agree the date change of the next Management Committee in July 2022.

18. Lead Member and Member Champions Annual Report (*Pages 227 - 274*)

Purpose:

To note the Annual Reports from Lead Members and Member Champions below:

- a) Budget and Income Generation Lead Member– Councillor Dennis Benneyworth
- b) Collaboration Lead Member – Councillor David Cannon
- c) Community Risk Management Plan Lead Member – Councillor Dexter Smith
- d) Strategic Assets Lead Member – Councillor Angus Ross
- e) Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing Member Champion – Councillor Christine Bateson
- f) Organisational Development Member Champion – Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons
- g) Armed Forces Honorary Member Champion – Councillor Angus Ross
- h) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Honorary Member Champion – Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle

19. Forward Plan (*Pages 275 - 278*)

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

20. Recommendation:

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

21. Date of the Next Meeting

Thursday, 30 June 2022, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

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



Held on Tuesday, 15th February 2022, at 6.30 pm

Theale Community Fire Station, Wigmore Lane, Reading RG7 5HH

Members:
*(*present)*

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

In Attendance: Mark Antell (Senior Communication and Engagement Officer, SC&EO)
Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer CFO)
Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
Doug Buchanan (Area Manager, Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
Tom Carvell (Senior IT Technical Support Officer)
Maisie Head (Business Support Officer, BSO)
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
Andrew Mclenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Tom Nice (IT Technical Support Officer (IT TSO)
Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)
Christian Riley (Communications and Engagement Assistant, C&EA)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
Hannah Sheehan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
Tregear Thomas (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

Action

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Brown, Cheema, Minhas

and Simpson.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Ross and Cannon declared a personal interest as 2021/22 Members of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2021, AND 5 JANUARY 2022

Jim Powell, Area Manager Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P), confirmed he had completed the Part I action on page 15 of the agenda pack, and Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), confirmed he completed Part I action on page 18 of the agenda pack. Both actions were to provide further information to Councillor Jeff Brooks on the Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Consultation and Income generation.

There were no record actions in the Part II Minutes.

RESOLVED that Part I and Part II Minutes, and actions of the meeting held on 2 November 2021, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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

44. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Member appointment and farewell to Councillor Chadwick

Councillor Anne Chadwick had stepped down from Royal Berkshire Fire Authority from 31 January 2022. On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chairman thanked her for her service to the Authority and wished her the best of luck in her future endeavours.

Councillor Alison Swaddle was appointed by Wokingham Borough Council to replace Councillor Chadwick. The Chairman welcomed her to the Fire Authority and stated he found being a member of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority rewarding. He added, there was so much to learn about Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and stated she would be supported along the way. He presented her with a copy of the Members Handbook, fob, providing access to

all Fire Stations in the County and Fire Authority Member badge. He stated that Councillor Swaddle's formal appointment onto the Fire Authority would take place at Item 10.

Arrival of Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices

At the start of January 2022, 18 new Firefighter Apprentices began training towards becoming wholetime firefighters.

The apprentices spent two days at Whitey Wood and Service Headquarters where they were given an introduction to the Service.

Currently, they were away on an eight-week training course at the Fire Service College in Gloucestershire. However, they will return to Royal Berkshire to complete the final five weeks of their training before graduating in April 2022.

On-call recruits

Six new On-Call recruits were welcomed into the Service in January 2022, who have already taken their first steps towards becoming fully fledged firefighters.

To mark the first milestone on this journey, the recruits were presented with certificates welcoming them into the Service.

Having completed the first two weeks of basic training, the new starters have now joined their stations where they will work as trainee firefighters for at least nine months.

Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation

The Service are now halfway through our public consultation on how we should respond to Automatic Fire Alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings, such as, shops, office blocks and factories to help reduce the burden of false alarms on the Service.

Over 99% of the Automatic Fire Alarm calls attended each year end up being false alarms, so we are asking the public to consider if we should change the way we respond to these calls, which could free up to 1,300 hours of firefighter time for other priority work.

We are asking residents to consider the two options set out in this public consultation, one which reflects a change to our current policy to help reduce the burden of false alarms and one in which our current policy remains the same.

No decisions have been made and all feedback will be vital for the decision-making process.

To take part in the consultation, please visit our website.

RBFA Members' Code of Conduct Consultation

A six-week consultation was launched on Draft Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Code of Conduct.

The consultation was seeking the public's views on the adoption of the majority of the Local Government Association's (LGAs) Model Code of Conduct including information on the investigation of Member complaints.

The consultation will close 9am on Friday, 11 March, and survey results will be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee to make further

recommendations to the Fire Authority.

Theale Art Competition

Art students in Year 8 and Year 11 at Theale Green School recently took part in a competition to produce artwork for the new community fire station in Theale. Over 40 pieces of artwork were submitted by students across both year groups. The quality of all the artwork was very high, meaning that selecting the winner was a very difficult decision to make.

A panel comprised of representatives from the Fire Station and the Fire Authority met in December to agree a winner.

The Chairman congratulated Evan Rose, in Year 8, who was selected as the winner of this competition. Evan will now be working with a professional designer to bring their artwork to life here at Theale.

Rowe Court Update

The Chief Fire Officer provided an update on the tragic Rowe Court fire that happened in Reading, in December 2021.

After a complex recovery process, two victims were recovered from the building on Monday, 31 January 2022. The missing persons were formally identified by Her Majesty's Coroner as Neil Morris, aged 45 and Richard Burgess, aged 46. The Thames Valley Police Major Crime Unit was continuing its investigation into the incident, and a man was charged in connection with it. The site has remained a crime scene, and work to safely dismantle the building continues. The Service will continue to work with and be supported by specialist teams from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Urban Search and Rescue Team as part of the ongoing recovery efforts. A full fire investigation to determine the cause of the fire was underway and work continues with our partners to resolve this incident as swiftly and as safely as possible. This has undoubtedly been an extremely upsetting and difficult time for everyone affected.

On behalf of Royal Berkshire Authority and the Service, the Chairman gave his condolences to the family and friends of those who passed away in this devastating incident.

Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle announced the new Police Sergeant based at Bracknell South had discovered Police personnel were not using the Police point at Crowthorne Community Fire Station, as their base. Due to desk shortages at Bracknell Police Station, Bracknell South Team will now be based at Crowthorne Community Fire Station. A marked car will be parked outside the building to demonstrate a police presence. A meeting will be held with Bracknell South community, police and stakeholders to discuss the deployment of police from Crowthorne Community Fire Station.

45. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Audit and Governance Committee.

46. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

47. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

48. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

Item 12, Pay Policy Statement, recommended from Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 24 January 2022, and Item 15, Scheme of Allowances Annual Review 2022/23, recommended from Management Committee on 3 February 2022.

49. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), outlined the report was seeking the Fire Authority to note the appointment of Councillor Swaddle onto the Fire Authority and to agree her appointment onto Audit and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Councillor Chadwick had stepped down from the Authority and her membership was terminated at midnight on 31 January 2022, be noted.
- 2) The appointment of Councillor Swaddle onto the Authority from 1 February 2022, be noted.
- 3) Councillor Swaddle's appointment onto Audit and Governance Committee, be agreed.

50. ANNUAL BUDGET 22/23, MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN, STRATEGIC ASSET INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK AND THE THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE BUDGET

Councillor Dennis Benneyworth, as Budget and Income Generation Lead Member introduced the report. He stated the Authority's strategic commitment five states, *'we will ensure Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) would provide good value for money'*. He stated, this commitment sat at the heart of the 2022/23 Budget recommendation. He listed the Authority's financial challenges and the Authority's reliance on reserves to bridge the funding gap.

He asked Members to consider the recommendation to increase the precept by £5 to close the gap in the budget and to build resilience.

Conor Byrne, HF&P, reported the Authority had seen a funding gap over the last few years. In order to remain resilient and effective, the Authority required a sustainable level of funding. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (Appendix B) reflect additional pressures and savings.

COVID related rate relief on Business Rates income continue to impact collection funds with large deficits. The Authority will receive Section 31 Grants that will offset this negative impact. The Section 31 Grant amount to a total of £1.4 million pounds.

The Tax Base for Council Tax had improved and increased from 1% to 1.5% in MTFP. The settlement funding increased by 1.91% (£101,000). The Government will provide one-off Service Grant in 2022/23 to cover the increase in National Insurance contributions.

Risks – In relation to the actual amounts of the year-end figures in 2021/22, the Authority will need to repay collection fund deficits. Government policy to reset Business Rate baseline. The baseline will be set at a higher level, which will lead to a loss in income to the Authority.

Expenditure – Efficiencies from the savings from the closure of Pangbourne Fire Station, the sale of Dee Road Fire Station and the move to Theale Fire Station will reduce running costs. The Authority had successfully appealed business rate charges on 16 of its properties.

The capital investment in fleet is resulting in lower maintenance costs.

Over the past few years, the Authority has stressed the impact unbudgeted pay awards have on the revenue account. In 2021/22, salary budgets were set based on the assumption of a pay freeze; however, an increase of 1.5% was agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Grey Book staff and are currently negotiating 1.75% for Green Book staff (although this has not been accepted to date). £439,000 has been built into the base budget.

For pay assumptions for 2022/23 and beyond, the MTFP has built on the assumption of annual pay awards of 2.5%. Pay is agreed nationally by NJC, therefore it could be agreed at a higher level, which will be addressed within the Authority's reserve budget.

Conor Byrne reported an increase in employer contributions in Pension Schemes and the MTFP assumes ongoing Government funding of £1,663,000 per annum until 2025/26 to cover this.

The £5 increase in the precept would help balance the budget, and he stated that the Authority will need to consider its Reserves Policy (Appendix F).

Capital Programme – Only Phase One of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) can be financed, attached as Appendix C. 2022/23 will see the delivery of the following Phase One projects:

- Implementation of ICT Strategy
- White Fleet Replacement Programme

Action

The Fleet Replacement programme involves the disposal of vehicles and the purchase of electric vehicles. The Authority will enter into a collective agreement with the Environment Agency for the purchase of a vehicle. In addition, the continuation of implementation of the ICT Strategy is a refresh and enhancement of communications equipment and mobile capability.

The Prudential Indicators report on the affordability of the Capital Programme. The method of calculation in 2022/23 remain unchanged. Conor Byrne outlined the Bank of England had increased bank rate for the third time, and the increase in energy price will impact the Authority.

In discussing Appendix I (TVFCS Budget 2022/23), Conor Byrne provided a comprehensive update on the Capex Programme, the Capital contribution made by each partner (Royal Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire County Council) and confirmed all partners stated they wish to continue as Joint Control partners. He added the legal agreement had a clause after five years, which gave each partner the option to withdraw from the agreement.

A total of 75% of respondents from the public consultation were in favour of the increase of Council Tax to £5. The proposed increase would fund the unbudgeted pay awards, Fleet and ICT programmes.

Councillor Werner asked for the detailed business cases for ICT capital projects.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), advised that the Senior Leader Team and Strategic Performance Board regularly reviewed risks on the Corporate Risk register.

In referring to the SAIF, Councillor Gittings queried how much of Phase Two did Officers foresee the Authority achieving in 2022/23.

Conor Byrne confirmed it was the intention to deliver ICT and Fleet programmes in Phase Two.

Councillor Brooks requested for further detail in the ICT programme, in order to identify a return on investment.

The Chairman requested Tony Vincent, Head of Business and Information Systems to present the ICT business case report at the next Audit and Governance Committee.

HBIS

Councillor Brooks queried page 23 of the Budget report and asked whether the Authority had been rigorous in identifying savings?

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), responded by stating the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) will consider efficiency and effectiveness, and that the Service continually looks for efficiencies.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Brooks on the reason why the Authority's reserve were high, Conor reported the reserves were high due to the capital receipts of surplus assets and that in comparison to 2018, the reserves had been reduced from over £14 million to £9.8 million.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman on whether the Authority will donate Tablets that were three years or older to schools, Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DCHX), reported the Service had a Replacement Policy that

was in line with Cyber Security and that assets were disposed of in the most beneficial way, taking account of value for money issues.

Councillor Shepherd-DuBey asked what would happen if an even higher rate of inflation were imposed? The Chairman referred to the Prudential indicator forecast on inflation and pay rises.

Councillor Benneyworth moved the recommendation and it was seconded by the Chairman.

Councillor Gittings stated on behalf of the Labour Group, he supported the motion and recognised a great deal of lobbying Central Government was held by the Authority. In referring to the significant increase in inflation, he stated that it was the duty of Members to ensure the Service was properly funded.

Councillor Ross requested Members approve the annual refresh of the SAIF. He added the Authority were approaching the end of Phase One, which had resulted in savings in the revenue budget. He stated that the capital expenditure represented value for money.

The Vice-Chairman commented on the huge amount of work that had been put into the 2022/23 Budget and stated the cross party lobbying had been a success. The proposed £5 increase meant that Council Tax for a Band D property in Berkshire was £73.95 for the year, which was an increase of under 10 pence per week.

Councillor Stanford-Beale stated many elements of the Budget report was presented to Audit and Governance Committee. She urged the importance to invest in fleet, buildings, staff and TVFCS. In referring to response of the Service at the recent Rowe Court incident, in relation to survivors and Firefighters, she commended the budget.

Councillor Smith stated the last Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection had graded the Authority as 'good'. He outlined that the Service had maintained its Response Standard, supported Slough Borough Council and other agencies during COVID. He stated he supported the recommendation and asking for an extra £5 would allow the Service to achieve more programmes within the SAIF.

Councillor Shepherd-DuBey reported on behalf of the Liberal Democratic Group, she will abstain from the vote, as she stated that more detailed business cases should have been provided to support the ICT strategy.

Councillor Lovelock acknowledged the extra £5 in the Council Tax would put some families under extreme pressure, however, the £5 for Fire was much needed. She commented on the one-year settlement and suggested Members to lobby the government to reform.

The Chairman highlighted the Authority was in the lowest quartile of precepting Fire Authorities. Fixed percentage rises in the precept meant that compared to other fire authorities with higher precepts, Royal Berkshire are being disadvantaged and this disparity only grows year on year.

He stated, it is against this background that all members from all parties unanimously tasked him to lobby local MPs for greater flexibility in raising the precept. MPs from both Labour and Conservative put forward the argument to

Government that, as a lowest quartile precepting Authority, should be afforded greater flexibility in raising the precept. The Government in turn, has recognised there was an issue and has offered £5 flexibility to lowest quartile authorities to, as it says, *“assist them in addressing immediate pressures and to maintain a sustainable income baseline for future years”*.

The Chairman also stated, the £5 increase will allow the Authority to address the immediate pressure of the current year’s unbudgeted pay awards which was lobbied for by the FBU and agreed by the NJC, and it would help establish a sustainable income baseline in the medium term, which, should allow ongoing revenue investment in our capital programme.

He added, if Members accepted the increase and other fire authorities use whatever flexibility is on offer to them (either £5 or 1.99%) then Royal Berkshire will still be in the lowest quartile of precepting authorities in 2022/23.

As an Authority, he stated, we have always sought efficient and effective outcomes for the people of Royal Berkshire. After the Grenfell tragedy, Royal Berkshire moved quickly to invest in our fire safety capabilities, ensuring that limited resources were allocated to where they provide the most benefit to the public. Going forward, it is essential that the Authority have sufficient funding to be able to continue to allocate resources efficiently against risk. A key consideration in HMICFRS’s assessment of efficiency is its judgment of whether a service has sufficient financial resources to meet its corporate objectives. Furthermore, being able to demonstrate financial sustainability to our auditors is now a requirement to getting our accounts signed off.

For all of these reasons, it is essential that the Authority take advantage of the flexibility on offer and increase the precept by £5. Having been tasked by Members and lobbied by our MPs, the Government will now expect us to make use of this flexibility and, crucially, future calculations of Government grants will be on the basis that the Authority have taken advantage of the flexibility currently on offer.

The Chairman stated he expected all members to support this budget.

In Support – Councillor Bateson, Councillor Benneyworth, Councillor Cannon, Councillor Dudley, Councillor Gittings, Councillor Helliard-Symons, Councillor Linden, Councillor Lovelock, Councillor McKenzie-Boyle, Councillor Ross, Councillor Smith, Councillor Stanford-Beale, Councillor Swaddle.

Against – None

Abstained - Councillor Brooks, Councillor Shepherd-DuBey and Councillor Werner.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed and the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That an increase in the council tax precept of £5 by adopting the formal resolution in Appendix A and the Medium Term Financial Plan in Appendix B, be approved;

- 2) That the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) set out in Appendix C, be approved;
- 3) That the purchase of vehicles as set out in Appendix D, for which provision already exists within the SAIF, be approved;
- 4) That the ICT Capital Programme for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix E, for which provision already exists within the SAIF, be approved;
- 5) That the Reserves Policy in Appendix F, be approved;
- 6) That the Prudential Indicators, Treasury Strategy and Investment Strategy set out in Appendix G, be approved;
- 7) That the fees and charges for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix H, be approved;
- 8) That the TVFCS revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix I, as well as the contribution to the Renewals Fund of £50,000, be approved;
- 9) That it be agreed that the Authority will not withdraw from the TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement.

51. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&L&D), presented the Draft Pay Policy Statement. She stated that the report was a recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee on 24 January 2022. She highlighted the sections that had been updated, which was a change in the Car User Scheme and the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team.

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle moved the recommendation and it was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED that:

The Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 (Appendix A) be approved for publication.

52. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES

Action

Becci Jefferies, HHR&L&D, reported the requirement for the organisation to set Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives and for its review every four years, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of the revised EDI objectives is to tackle inequality and discrimination. In referring to the table outlined at 3.11 of the report, she stated the EDI objectives would go out for public consultation.

In response to a question from Councillor Gittings, Becci Jefferies reported that the EDI Action Plan underwent a review by the EDI Forum, and would be considered in due course by the new EDI Steering Group. She added that the EDI objectives were also reviewed as part of Quarterly Performance reports to the Audit and Governance Committee. Nikki Richards reported that all Members will be invited to comment on the objectives, prior to final review of consultation results.

Following a discussion about all Member invitations to EDI Forum meetings, Councillor Lovelock requested the dates of forthcoming EDI Forum meetings in the diary.

DSA

Councillor Brooks suggested that it would be useful to include some benchmarking of performance against other Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs), when the paper is brought back to the Fire Authority for decision.

HHR&L&D

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

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- 2) That the new proposed objectives can proceed to consultation, be agreed.

53. STATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE 2021

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), delivered a presentation to accompany the report on State of Fire 2021, which detail the outcome of the first tranche of round two inspections, held by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

She reported Sir Thomas Winsor expressed his disappointment in the speed of national reform. The White paper on Fire Reform is due in spring 2022.

Her presentation highlighted the emerging themes from the State of Fire 2021 report.

In preparation for RBFRS' next inspection, she listed RBFRS progress and inspection roadmap key dates.

In response to a question from Councillor Linden, Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire

Officer, (CFO), reported a new Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services will be in place by the end of the Service's second tranche of inspections.

Councillor Gittings asked how confident were Officers, the Service would show improvement. Wayne Bowcock reported this tranche of inspection would be more rigorous than the previous inspection. He stated COVID-19 had slowed progress.

In answer to a question from Councillor Brooks on operational independence, Wayne Bowcock, stated the matter related to the Scheme of Delegation.

In discussing the inspection process, the Chairman stated that he would have liked the inspection to focus on the governance of the Authority, due to its good Member / Officer relationship.

In referring to page 134 – 135 of the report, Councillor Stanford-Beale stated that some Services only produce financial plans one year ahead. The figure on page 135 show the reserves and provisions of all Fire and Rescue Services. She stated Royal Berkshire have been prudent with its reserves and show how well the Authority manages its budget.

Councillor Brooks stated that he still thought the Authority's reserves were high and pointed out that the Liberal Democrat Group had abstained from voting on the budget.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The State of Fire and Rescue 2021 report and the outcome of the first tranche of Round Two inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services be noted; and
- 2) The update provided on the preparations for the inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service be noted.

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

54. SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES ANNUAL REVIEW 2022/23

Graham Britten presented the 2022/23 Member Scheme of Allowance Review Report and stated the recommendation was from Management Committee at its meeting from 3 February 2022. The Authority is required to have regard to all Independent Remuneration Panels across the six Unitary Authority's in Berkshire. He finally stated that the Scheme continues to be indexed to staff employed under 'Green Book' conditions.

Councillor Werner expressed that he was unable to support this report.

The Chairman moved the recommendation, which was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Scheme of Allowances for 2022/23 be agreed (Appendix A);
- 2) It be noted, Subject to any pay award reached by the National Joint Council (NJC) for staff employed under 'Green Book' conditions, be backdated from 1 April 2021; and
- 3) It be noted the recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs).

55. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 28 April 2022, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG30 7SD.

(The meeting concluded at 8.37pm)

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



Held on Tuesday, 5th April, 2022 at 6.00 pm

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

- Members:**
(*present)
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Councillor Alison Swaddle | * Councillor Jeff Brooks |
| Councillor Avtar Cheema | Councillor Christine Bateson |
| Councillor Harjinder Minhas | * Councillor Colin Dudley |
| Councillor Dennis Benneyworth | Councillor Paul Gittings |
| Councillor Tricia Brown | * Councillor Pauline Helliars-Symons |
| Councillor David Cannon | Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle |
| * Councillor Tony Linden | * Councillor Angus Ross |
| * Councillor Jo Lovelock | * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey |
| Councillor Garth Simpson | * Councillor Dexter Smith |
| Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale | Councillor Simon Werner |

- In Attendance:** Mark Antell (Senior Communication and Engagement Officer, SC&EO)
 Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
 Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
 Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
 Doug Buchanan (Area Manager, Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
 Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
 Andrew Mclenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)
 Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
 Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
 Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)
 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
 Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

Action

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christine Bateson, Dennis Benneyworth, Tricia Brown, Tina McKenzie-Boyle, David Cannon, Paul Gittings, Hajinder Minhas, Garth Simpson and Alison Swaddle.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 3

Appendix A

Action

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members.

Katie Mills declared a personal interest on Item 7 on the agenda (Appointment Panel Recommendation – Assistant Chief Fire Officer / Director of Service Delivery) and advised that she will leave the meeting during that item.

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

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

60. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Audit and Governance Committee.

61. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

62. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

63. APPOINTMENT PANEL RECOMMENDATION - ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Katie Mills left the meeting at the commencement of this item.

The Chairman stated that last October the Management Committee agreed a paper presented by the Chief, which outlined the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team. The paper included a change in reporting line for the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) to report to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO). The salary scale for the ACFO was noted and remains unchanged. The Fire Authority Terms of Reference state that the Authority must agree the appointment of any individual where the salary scale is over £100,000. The paper asks that the Authority agree the appointment of Katie Mills to the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

In response to a question from Councillor Brooks, Mark Arkwell stated there was a typo in the report in paragraph 1.2 and the word '**subject**' should be removed.

Councillor Smith stated he supported the recommendation and commended Katie Mills work to date. He stated, she had stepped up during the transition of recruitment of Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Officer, and COVID-19 and advised she was a good appointment for the Fire Authority and provided resilience to the Service.

The Vice-Chairman stated, she also supported the recommendation and had confidence in Katie's appointment as Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED:**

The appointment of Katie Mills, to the role of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer / Director of Service Delivery from 6th April 2022, on the salary package outlined in 3.5 and 3.6, be approved.

Katie Mills returned on conclusion of this item.

64. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 28 April 2022, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG30 7SD.

(The meeting concluded at 6.08pm)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (RBFRS) EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES
LEAD OFFICER	BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the revised equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives for the organisation, following the conclusion of public consultation. The report consequently outlines the methodology of and response to the consultation, and rationale for suggested minor amendments to the proposed objectives. This report will be supported by a presentation to the Fire Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of the report, and
- 2.2 **AGREE** that the new proposed objectives detailed at 3.8 of the report be adopted and published.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 This paper is brought to the Authority following the conclusion of public consultation as previously agreed at the 15 February meeting of the Authority.
- 3.2 A public consultation was opened on 28 February 2022 and closed on 4 April 2022. 252 responses were received overall, with respondents offered the

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option to agree or disagree with each proposed objective, and to provide any further comments should they wish to.

- 3.3 A summary of the consultation response agreement rates per objective can be found below:

Objective	Agreement Rate	Disagreement Rate
<p>1 – Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels: 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>149 – 82.78% (4)</p>	<p>31 – 17.22% (1)</p>
<p>2 – Leadership and corporate commitment: 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>163 – 90.56% (3)</p>	<p>17 – 9.44% (2)</p>
<p>3 – Improving our service delivery by creating strong links with our community: 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>168 – 93.33% (2)</p>	<p>12 – 6.67% (3)</p>
<p>4 – Creating an inclusive culture of equality and diversity: We will take 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>169 – 93.89% (1)</p>	<p>11 – 6.11% (4)</p>

- 3.4 Further detail on the response to the public consultation, including the consultation methodology and equality monitoring information, is outlined in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives Consultation Outcomes Report (Appendix A).

- 3.5 Moreover, Appendix B provides broader benchmarking information relevant to the current landscape of equality, diversity and inclusion in RBFRS as well as the sector more widely. Qualitative supporting detail can be found in the relevant Member Champion report, which provides a look back at the activities undertaken in pursuit of the existing EDI objectives over the past year.
- 3.6 A cross-party Member workshop was held on 12 April to review the response to the consultation and consider any required amendments to the objectives. Councillors Benneyworth, Shepherd-Dubey, Linden, Bateson and Brown were supported by the Member Champion Councillor McKenzie-Boyle and officers. An alteration to the language in objective 4 to acknowledge the progress we have made regarding culture was proposed and is detailed at 3.8 below.
- 3.7 In addition, it is proposed that a number of clarifying statements are included with the published objectives to provide further explanation and support the activities identified in the action plan. These will be developed in consultation with the EDI Forum.
- 3.8 This report will be supported by a presentation to the Fire Authority who are invited to agree the final proposed objectives:
- **Objective 1 – Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels:** 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.
 - **Objective 2 – Leadership and corporate commitment:** 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.
 - **Objective 3 – Improving our service delivery by creating strong links with our community:** 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.
 - **Objective 4 – Building on our inclusive culture:** 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.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications of agreeing the EDI objectives. The actions required to support achievement of the objectives will be clarified and outlined in appropriate documentation in due course, and may require additional resources and monies. Any such resource will be considered accordingly and business cases made where necessary and appropriate.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Authority is subject to the general and specific duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. The general duty requires the Authority, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - 1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
 - 2) advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.
- 6.2 Specific duties are set out in regulations made under Equality Act 2010, which relate to the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/353) requires the Authority to:
 - 1) publish information to demonstrate compliance with the duty imposed by the Act, which must include information relating to persons who share a “protected characteristic” (see above) who are a) employees; and b) other persons affected by its policies and practices; and
 - 2) to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives that should achieve any of the aims set out in the Act at least every four years.

6.4 Compliance is monitored by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

7. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This report considers the requirement and proposal of the equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. It has not been necessary to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) due to the nature of the report. Specific EIAs will be completed in line with the progression of this work and best practice guidance.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The delivery of activities in line with these objectives will support our continued efforts to minimise organisational risks, particularly risks relating to all forms of discrimination.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 The EDI Forum and newly established EDI Steering Group will work with stakeholders to ensure appropriate activities to meet the objectives are set out in the action plan and are monitored accordingly.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive has been consulted on the content of this paper.

10.2 The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on the content of this paper.

10.3 The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on the content of this paper.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Public Sector Equality Duty as cited in the Equality Act 2010.

11.2 RBFRS EDI Objectives – Fire Authority 15 February 2022.

11.3 Member Champion Report – EDI – Fire Authority 28 April 2022.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – EDI Consultation Outcomes Report

12.2 Appendix B – EDI Benchmarking Information

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Chloe Duncan – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator
(07733301740 | duncanc@rbfrs.co.uk)

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives Consultation

Summary Report



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Consultation Headlines

 **Total Responses**
252

 **Comments received on the online survey**
200

 **Respondents completed the entire survey**
67.8%

 **Community contacts were contacted**
1,373

Social Media Engagement

 **23,771 reached**
452 engagements

 **Story posts resulted in 9 more clicks to complete the survey**

 **73 engagements**
4,217 impressions

 **16 engagements**
320 impressions

 **113 visits to the webpage**
Spending an average of 3.24 minutes on the page

82.78% agreed with **Objective 1:** Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels: 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.

93.3% agreed with **Objective 3:** Improving our service delivery by creating strong links with our community: 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.

90.56% agreed with **Objective 2:** Leadership and corporate commitment: 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.

93.89% agreed with **Objective 4:** Creating an inclusive culture of equality and diversity. We will take 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.



Executive Summary

This report summarises the main findings from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives consultation, which was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA).

The consultation ran from 28 February 2022 – 4 April 2022, allowing five weeks for respondents to provide views on the proposed equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.

During the consultation, we received 252 responses from various stakeholders. Details of responses and respondent demographics are included within the report, but overall the consultation response demonstrated that there was agreement with the proposed objectives.

This document provides information on how the consultation was conducted and presents an analysis of the data gathered.

What We Consulted On

In line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010, the Fire Authority encouraged as many people as possible to have their say on our four revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives.

The four objectives proposed were:

- Objective 1 – **Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels:** 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.
- Objective 2 – **Leadership and corporate commitment:** 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.
- Objective 3 – **Improving our service delivery by creating strong links with our community:** 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.
- Objective 4 – **Creating an inclusive culture of equality and diversity:** We will take 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.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each objective, and were furthermore offered the opportunity to express more detailed views in comments on each individual objective, as well as overall.

Methodology

As noted, the Equality Act 2010 sets out the requirement for public authorities to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Essentially, this places a duty on public bodies to consider how policies and decisions conducted by the organisation affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

The intention of this duty is to accelerate progress towards equality, by placing a responsibility on public bodies to consider how they can work to tackle inequalities and discrimination specifically relating to individuals with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act.

The requirements of the PSED are categorised into general and specific duties:

General Duties

- Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires us to demonstrate compliance with the PSED
- 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 characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Specific Duties

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually
- Set equality objectives, at least every four years.

This consultation period ran for five consecutive weeks from 28 February 2022 – 4 April 2022. In carrying out the consultation, RBFRS followed the legal principles that underpin consultation. These are known as the four ‘Gunning Principles’ which specify how public bodies should consult. They specify that:

- ✓ Consultation should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage;



- ✓ Sufficient information is provided to allow intelligent consideration of the proposals;
- ✓ Adequate time is given for response; and
- ✓ Responses are conscientiously considered before decisions are taken.

RBFRS' [Consultation Strategy](#) can be accessed online.

Consultation Resources

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives consultation was publicised across the Service's digital channels, including social media platforms, website, intranet (available to RBFRS staff) and online and local media.

Consultation materials were made available via a number of accessible methods.

These included:

- Online via rbfrs.co.uk/consultations
- By emailing consultations@rbfrs.co.uk
- By writing to:
 - Chloe Duncan,
 - EDI Co-ordinator
 - Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue
 - Newsham Court
 - Pincents Kiln
 - Reading
 - Berkshire
 - RG31 7SD

Local and Online Media

In order to improve engagement with the consultation, specific stakeholders were identified and contacted directly.

Feedback from all stakeholders were obtained using the following engagement methods:

Online Survey

The consultation team designed an online survey to collect quantitative and qualitative data responses to the consultation questions. This enabled the team to analyse numerical data and also provided an in-depth look at the nature of responses given.



Website

A section was created on the RBFRS website on the 'Consultation' page. This included:

- An introduction, detailing what the consultation was focusing on.
- Information on how people could take part in the consultation.
- A link to the survey.
- An email address, postal address and telephone number to provide alternative methods of response.
- Details on accessibility, for people requiring alternative formats or languages.

We had a total of 113 visits to the website page during the time it was running, with users spending an average of 3 minutes and 24 seconds on the page.

Media

A press release was issued to media contacts at the beginning of the consultation on Monday, 28 February 2022, which provided details of the consultation and how to get involved, outlining the reasons for the consultation and the importance of taking part.

External Promotion

Letters were sent via email to various partner agencies and contacts, including other Fire and Rescue Services, the Leaders of the unitary authorities, MPs and Town and Parish Councils, and representative bodies including the Fire Brigades Union. Moreover, 1,373 community contacts across a broad range of organisations – from schools to faith groups and disability inclusion organisations – were also contacted. This wide range of contacts was used in order to encourage as many areas of our community as possible to take part in our consultation – particularly those who have been under-represented in our consultations in previous years.

Details of the consultation were shared with local authorities to include in their residents' newsletter and featured in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's newsletter on 18 March 2022.

Social Media

To complement the channels above, social media was used throughout the consultation programme to enable respondents to share the information and to encourage engagement.

Information was posted on RBFRS' Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages at regular intervals, to encourage people to participate in the consultation.



We also engaged partner organisations to further raise awareness of the consultation, including the Business Disability Forum and Inclusive Employers, both organisations of which RBFRS is a current member.

Analytics

Analytics for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram are as follows:

Our Facebook posts resulted in **23,771** people being reached and **452 engagements**. We posted in more than 50 community groups to raise awareness of the consultation.

In total, our Twitter posts received **4,217 impressions** and had **73 engagements**.

Our LinkedIn posts achieved **320 impressions** and **16 engagements**. Our posts on Instagram resulted in a further 9 clicks directly through to the consultation survey.

Internal Communications

Siren (our service intranet page) featured an announcement of the opening of the consultation and regular reminders for staff to take part. Ahead of the public consultation period, the EDI Forum was consulted and offered the opportunity to share input regarding the revised objectives. This provided the opportunity to discuss the proposed changes and promoted understanding of the drivers for change.

On the day of launch, an email was sent to all staff on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer, outlining the details of the consultation and explaining the importance of taking part.

Updates were also posted on Workplace, a platform for businesses run by Facebook. It allows members to post in various groups with different groups of staff. The survey link was shared on Workplace to encourage more staff to take part.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

RBFRS recognises the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

In line with consultation best practice, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed for the consultation process. The intent of the EIA is to ensure that we are aware of the risks and impacts of our work on individuals or groups who share protected characteristics, and other non-statutory social characteristics as identified within our documentation (such as rurality, homelessness and those with caring responsibilities).



Analysis of Responses

The majority of the data was gathered via an online survey conducted using 'Survey Monkey'. All data was anonymised in line with best practice.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was used in a number of ways during this consultation. Our Survey Monkey platform enabled us to provide an indication of response rate to the survey, including skipped questions and impartial completions. It also provided:

- Equality and diversity information to analyse the demographic profile of respondents.
- The overall percentage of responses who agreed or disagreed with each objective. This indicated the weight of preference from the respondents in total.

Qualitative Data

The option to provide further comments as part of the survey response was used to enable respondents to provide individual and specific feedback on the consultation proposals.

Responses were analysed using coding methodology and common themes in the feedback were highlighted.

We received 252 responses to the consultation, 199 specific comments on the objectives and 54 additional comments which are included in Appendix 1 below.

Response to Consultation

We received 252 responses to the consultation in total, via the online survey platform. We consulted more widely than ever before, using a range of communications channels, as outlined above.

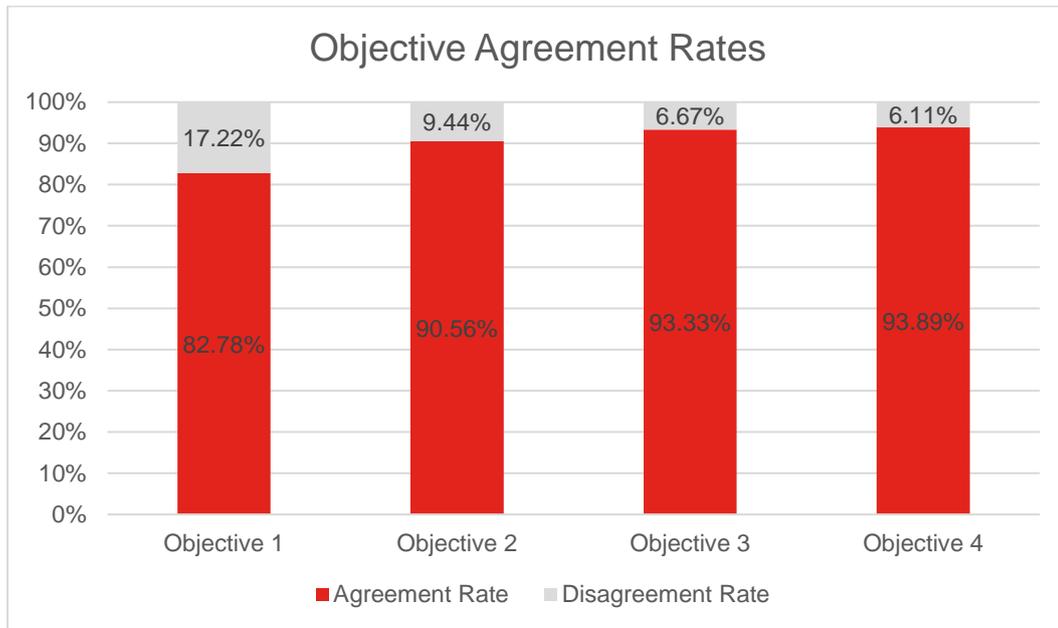
The tables and figures below illustrate the demographic profile of the respondents who gave their feedback to the consultation through our Survey Monkey platform.

Within our data reporting, we have noted the number of questions that were answered, as well as the number of questions skipped. We have presented this data in order to be transparent. We felt that it was important that respondents do have the option to skip questions, in order to encourage participation and a higher response rate. If we were not to allow respondents to skip questions, we may have achieved a lower response rate or missed an opportunity to collect data and feedback about our proposals across the survey.



Main Findings

Overall Response



The data shows that:

- Overall, the predominant response to each objective was agreement.
- The lowest agreement rate was for Objective 1 (increasing the diversity of staff at all levels) at 82.78%, equating to 149 responses in agreement and 31 disagreeing with this objective.
- The highest agreement rate was for Objective 4 (creating an inclusive culture of equality and diversity) at 93.89%, equating to 169 responses in agreement and 11 disagreeing with this objective.
- Between this, both Objective 2 and Objective 3 were largely supported by respondents. Objective 2 was agreed to by 163 respondents, with 17 disagreeing. Similarly, Objective 3 was agreed to by 168 respondents, with 12 in disagreement.

Summary of Themes

Respondents were offered the opportunity to add comments for each individual objective as well as the overall consultation, with a significant number choosing to do so as detailed in the table below:



Objective	Number of Comments
1	71
2	45
3	37
4	46
Overall	54

A number of common themes were identified amongst respondents to the consultation. Responses were analysed and coded by theme to assess the concerns of respondents and to identify key positive and negative thoughts around the proposed objectives.

Objective 1:

- Positive responses were conditional on ensuring that we still select the best person for the job
- Negative responses included a small proportion of extreme negative responses; general disagreement related to the objective was based on a misconception that we would not select on merit; that this constitutes positive discrimination; that we are incorporating targets/numbers
- Neutral comments were concerned with how we would measure achievement of this, and the need for the service to be trained on why this is important. They also suggested inclusion of retention and progression considerations.

Objective 2:

- Positive responses were conditional on the need for further support and training for staff; support for leaders challenging inappropriate behaviour; a desire more for visibility of and access to SLT
- Negative responses again included a small proportion of extreme negative responses, with other disagreement related to concern that this is not related to our primary role of fighting fires
- Neutral comments suggested the importance of supporting the objectives with clear actions.

Objective 3:

- A greater proportion of comments provided for this objective were positive; respondents agree that this is an important objective, that the Service should seek to acknowledge and be reflective of the diversity of Berkshire, and that we currently do not have sufficient understanding of our communities and their needs. They also emphasised the importance of acting on this commitment
- Disagreement was primarily related to the concern that we are suggesting that diverse communities are automatically the most vulnerable; that this is not our job and we should focus on our primary role of fighting fires
- Neutral comments expressed concern that the Service doesn't have sufficient infrastructure to resource this.



Objective 4:

- Positive responses acknowledged that an inclusive culture should be a given in every organisation.
- There was again a small proportion of extreme negative responses; broader disagreement related to the misconception that this objective involves employing people specifically to create diversity, and questioned what actions would be taken to achieve this objective.
- Neutral comments expressed concern about the difficulty of achieving this objective, and noted that this is an important objective to achieve but emphasised the importance of ensuring that this is the reality of experience for all staff.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring

We are continually working to improve the way in which we reach and engage with different groups across Royal Berkshire and continue making conscious efforts to increase the accessibility and availability of the consultation material and methods, in order to further improve engagement with individuals and communities. In the future, we will additionally be considering the pre-engagement work we may be able to do with different groups within our County to inform our consultation activity and promote inclusivity within our work with the public.

Within this consultation, it is useful to note that we have expanded the opportunity for respondents to self-describe. This has been offered to increase the inclusivity of the consultation. For future consultations, we will be considering how we can continue to develop the accessibility and inclusivity in line with good practice.

The following provides an outline of key themes from the equality monitoring questions included in the consultation, separated by characteristic in line with the consultation questions, which all respondents were given the option to complete.

Figures used for representation of the population of Berkshire are taken from the most recent [National Census in 2011](#), as well as The Office for National Statistics. We await the publication of the next Census later this year and will use it to inform our understanding of the community we serve.

Respondents Profile

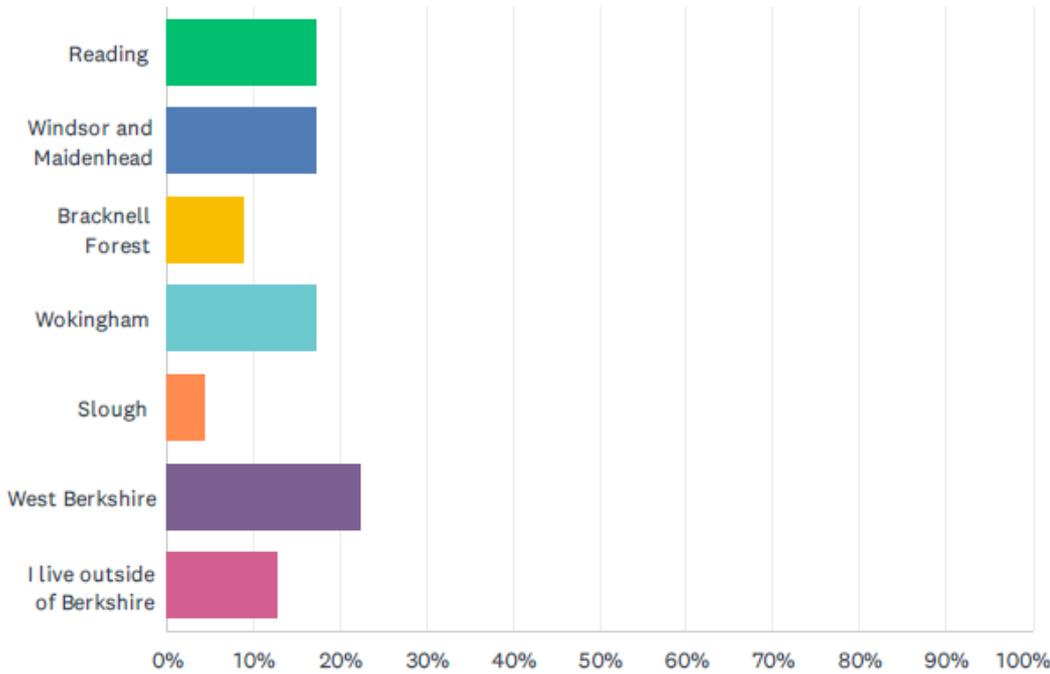
The figures below illustrate the demographic profile for all responses via the Survey Monkey questionnaire. RBFRS are committed to promoting equality and diversity, and therefore by collecting this information we are able to monitor the response rate to our consultation across a range of communities and backgrounds. This enables us to continually evaluate our work and to improve efforts to engage a representative sample of people within Royal Berkshire as a process of ongoing development. The equality and diversity information also enables us to monitor the weight of responses from RBFRS personnel in comparison to members of the public.



Unitary Response Rates

Q8 If you are a resident of Berkshire, please select which Unitary Authority you live in

Answered: 157 Skipped: 95



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Reading	17.20%	27
Windsor and Maidenhead	17.20%	27
Bracknell Forest	8.92%	14
Wokingham	17.20%	27
Slough	4.46%	7
West Berkshire	22.29%	35
I live outside of Berkshire	12.74%	20
TOTAL		157

This data shows:

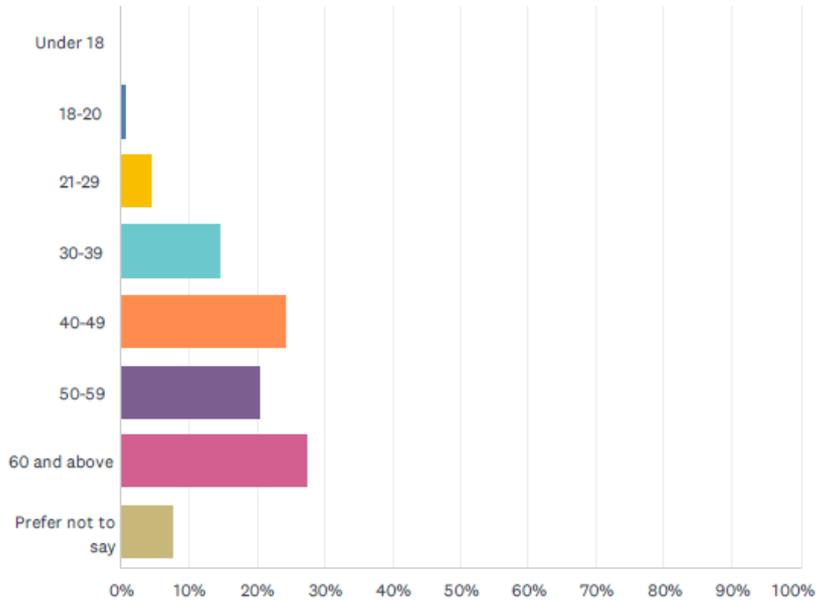
- The largest response group was West Berkshire
- Similarly significant proportions from Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham
- A small amount of responses from Bracknell Forest, fewest from Slough
- Comparatively similar pattern to some previous RBFRS consultations.



Age

Q9 What is your age?

Answered: 156 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-20	0.64%	1
21-29	4.49%	7
30-39	14.74%	23
40-49	24.36%	38
50-59	20.51%	32
60 and above	27.56%	43
Prefer not to say	7.69%	12
TOTAL		156

This data shows:

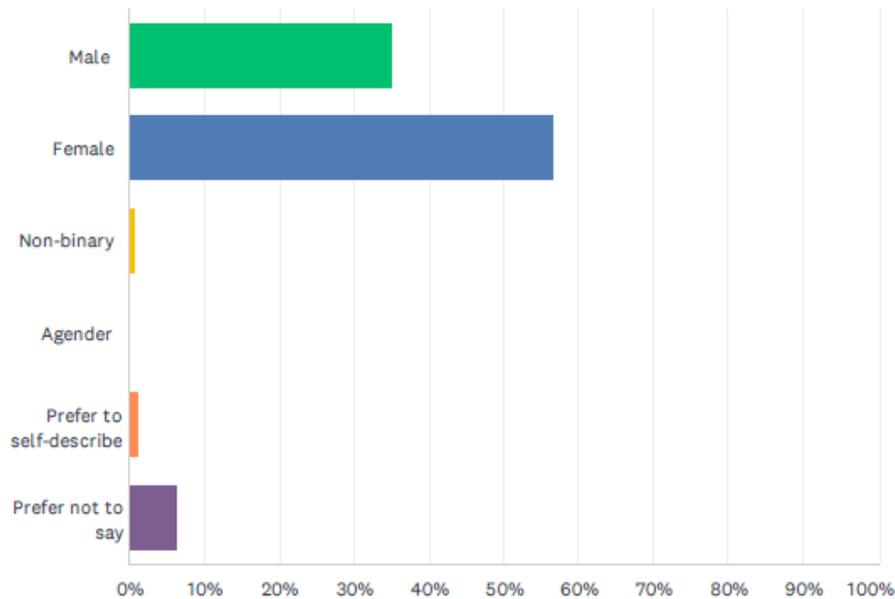
- The largest response group was West Berkshire
- Largest response groups – 40-49, 60+, followed by 50-59, 30-39
- Small number of responses from younger age groups
- Comparatively similar pattern to previous RBFRS consultations regarding lower proportions of responses from younger age groups.



Gender Identity

Q10 Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 95



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Male	35.03% 55
Female	56.69% 89
Non-binary	0.64% 1
Agender	0.00% 0
Prefer to self-describe	1.27% 2
Prefer not to say	6.37% 10
TOTAL	157

This data shows:

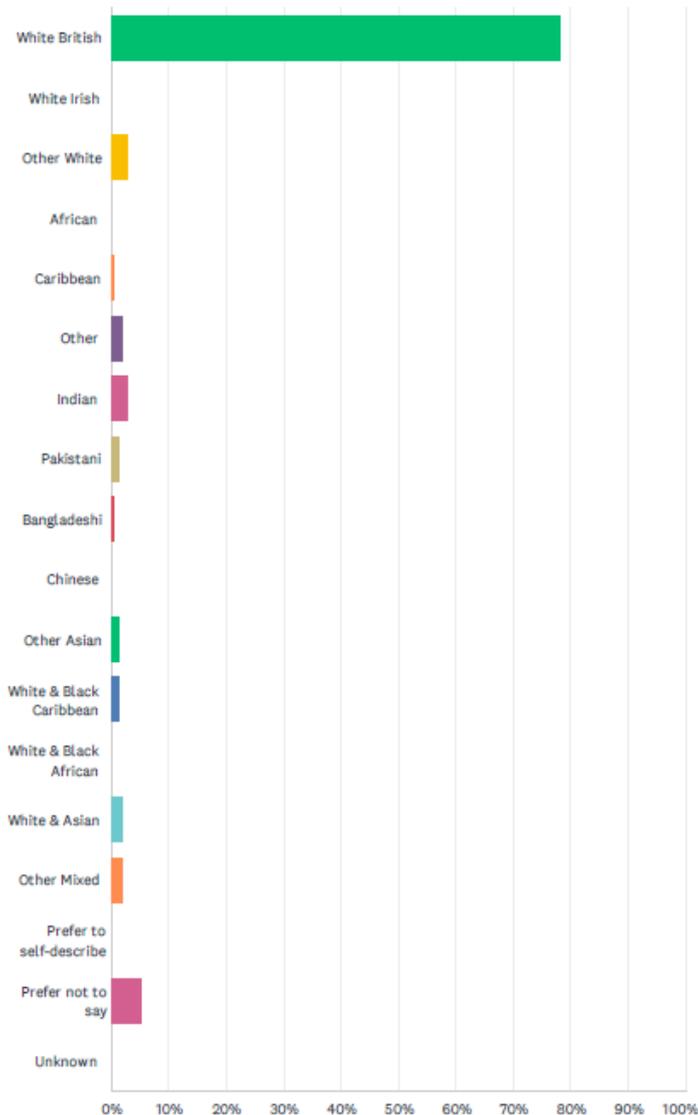
- 56.69% female, 35.03% male
- Small % of non-binary, prefer to self-describe and prefer not to say
- This is in contrast to some other RBFRS consultations, where there is a tendency for higher proportion of responses from those identifying as men.



Ethnicity

Q14 Which of the following best describes your Ethnic Group?

Answered: 150 Skipped: 102



This data shows:

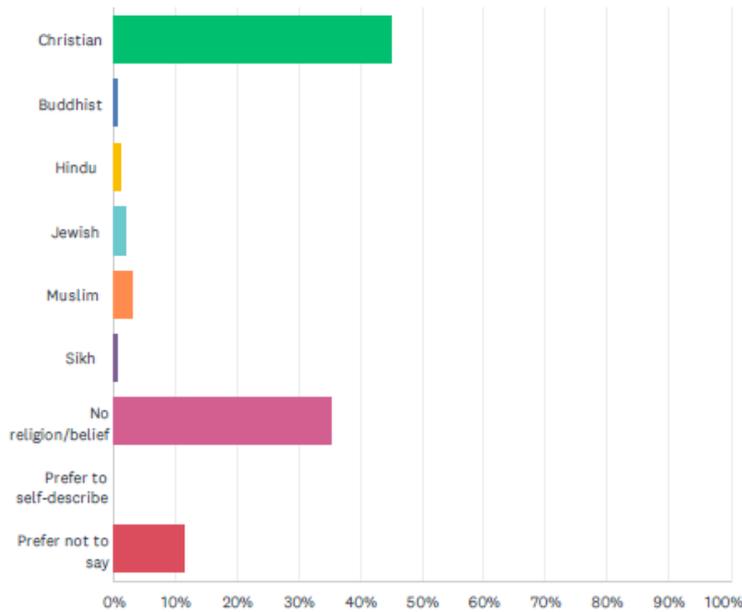
- 78% of respondents were White British, all other represented groups had totals of less than 3%; 5.33% selected prefer not to say
- Comparatively similar pattern to previous RBFRS consultations
- It is important to note that ethnic diversity ranges significantly across the County; 2011 census 27.32% of census respondents were from groups other than White British
- Further work is required to ensure seldom heard groups are included in our consultations.



Religion and Belief

Q13 Which of the following best describes your Religion?

Answered: 155 Skipped: 97



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Christian	45.16%	70
Buddhist	0.65%	1
Hindu	1.29%	2
Jewish	1.94%	3
Muslim	3.23%	5
Sikh	0.65%	1
No religion/belief	35.48%	55
Prefer to self-describe	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	11.61%	18
TOTAL		155

This data shows:

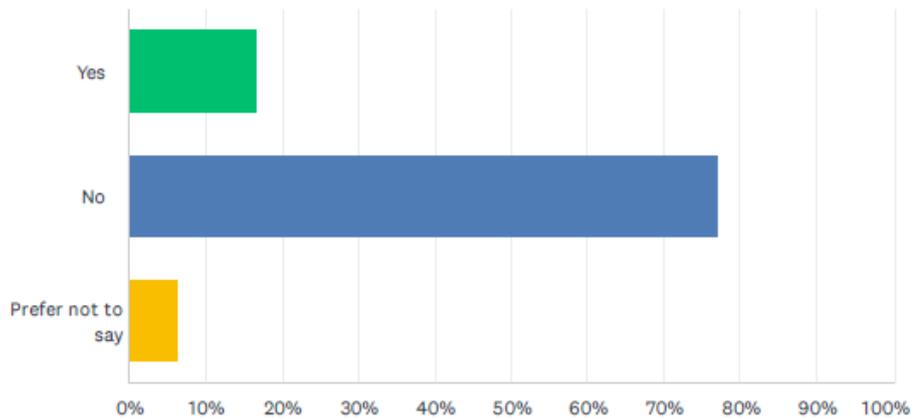
- 45.16% Christian, 35.48% no religion or belief, very small percentage of respondents identified their religion or belief as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh.
- Comparatively similar pattern to previous RBFRS consultations.
- Christianity and no religion are the predominant groups in Berkshire, but the response rate for this consultation is still not reflective of proportion of other groups according to [ONS Local Authority data](#). Further work is required to engage more effectively with these under-represented groups.



Disability

Q11 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Answered: 156 Skipped: 96



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	16.67% 26
No	76.92% 120
Prefer not to say	6.41% 10
TOTAL	156

This data shows:

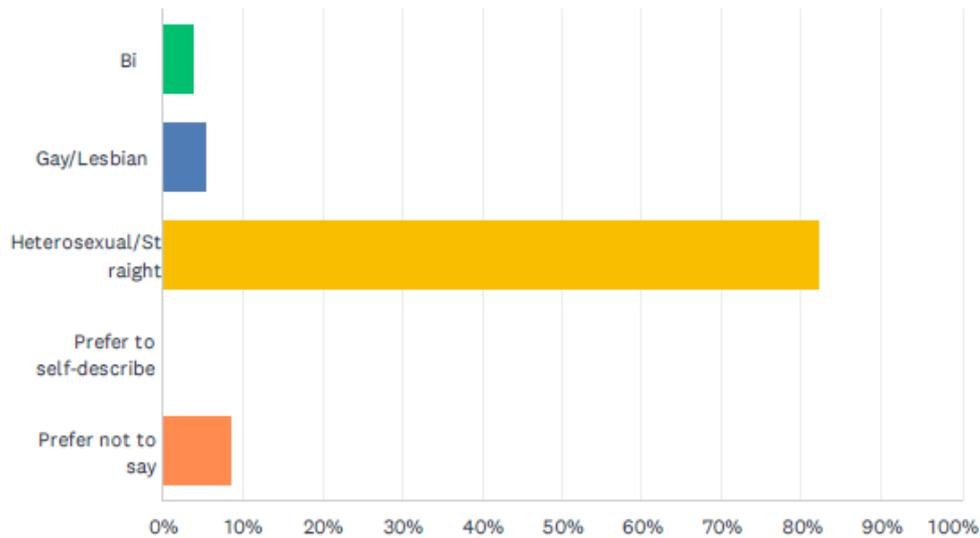
- 16.67% respondents do consider themselves to have a disability
- For future consultation activity, this data has highlighted the continued need to work towards a more representative response from those who identify as having a disability and that we may focus our engagement strategy to encourage more participation from and/or make our consultation methodology and materials increasingly accessible to those identifying as having a disability or long-term health condition.



Sexual Orientation

Q12 Which of the following best describes your Sexual Orientation?

Answered: 153 Skipped: 99



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bi	3.92%	6
Gay/Lesbian	5.23%	8
Heterosexual/Straight	82.35%	126
Prefer to self-describe	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	8.50%	13
TOTAL		153

This data shows:

- The largest response group was those identifying as heterosexual/straight with 82.35% of responses
- There were responses also from those identifying in LGBTQ+ groups including bi, gay/lesbian, although it is important to continue to consider how we can engage with our local LGBTQ+ community in future consultations.



Summary and Next Steps

RBFRS will continue to review its consultation methods to ensure we communicate with our stakeholders in an effective and meaningful way. We welcome any feedback you may have, so please email consultations@rbfrs.co.uk with any suggestions.

On 28 April 2022, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority will conscientiously consider the outcomes of this report. The final objectives will be published accordingly following this.



APPENDIX 1

Respondent comments

Please note comments are lifted directly from consultation responses and only amended with asterisk * where necessary.

Objective 1

Excellent! This is exactly what we need!
Will this be by only allowing applications from the group you seek to improve representation from?
Providing the best person is always chosen for the job in hand and not just to make targets
People should be selected on merit, without positive or negative discrimination.
Yes as long as it is the right person for the role and not to meet targets. For instance: Someone in a customer facing role must have good English language skills with any other languages as a bonus
It is always a positive thing to try and include people from every walk of life as long as the people who are being hired and employed are also the best candidates for the job and not just being employed to represent a minority group.
It is important that our service reflects the communities we serve
Woke, Marxist, anti-merit, anti-white racist, anti-indigenous, misandrist, heterophobic, claptrap. Seriously damaging to capability, the workplace, and social cohesion.
This is a good policy as long as it does not impact on the skill level of new employees. Appointing people solely on the ethnicity / gender rather than a more qualified applicant is counter-productive.
You can't take on people from other ethnic backgrounds if there not capable of doing the job just so you can virtue signal and say you're diverse. That's where this kind of idea gets you.
Diversity creates disorder and inefficiency.
Diversity is not preclusion to competence, competence is



I believe in diversity and equality in the employment place providing that those who are employed are the right people for the job and not employed for "diversity sake" !!

An organisations first priority should be to ensure that new workplace candidates have the necessary skills, experience and knowledge for the job itself regardless of the individuals colour, race or sex. The organisation should not consciously be tasked to increase diversity and accept a candidate because they are LBGT.

Providing you are selecting the best candidates, reverse discrimination isn't the answer. Give everyone a fair chance

I think that any organisation should pick the people who can do the job properly regardless of sex, nationality, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

I would need to know if there is a problem or not at first

We need diversity in a diverse society

Selection should be primarily based on ability to perform the required roles to maximum effectiveness, regardless of 'diversity'.

You need the right people not just because they meet diversity Does any diversity relate to the same proportion as the population in Maidenhead?

Appoint the best people for the job

Subject to the caveat that a candidate should always be appointed on merit, not just because they are in a protected or under-represented cohort

The most appropriate person based on skill set

But it's broader than gender....diversity of culture, Neurodiversity etc

Can they do the job? Beyond that I don't care

Please also consider knowledge along with skills and behaviours

It is a progressive plan of action for sure.

Your recruitment processes need to proactively encourage those from minority communities to apply, to offer pre-application upskilling if needed and to recognise that the right 'behaviours' must not be defined through a British white male lens



Hire people on merit. By pushing the EDI narrative you exclude people from having the same opportunity. Until society rejects this equality, diversity and inclusion nonsense you will never eliminate racism/prejudice of any kind. A society that doesn't see race or hold prejudice of any kind would not need this policy and I feel that mostly we don't live in a racist society, it does exist, but it is a tiny minority that you will never eliminate. Policies such as this only reinforce people's prejudices

Employment on basis of skills / interest for the job rather than ethnicity

If children from diverse backgrounds see/know of people like them in FS they can have aspirations

Work with West Berkshire Council - long established policies for staff and now working with community

You must avoid a numbers game approach. Must be best person for job, not meeting targets.

Should be based on ability as opposed to positive discrimination

Wording too conditional - does not sound trustworthy or genuinely earnest

I believe that diversity is extremely important as it will bring different sets of skills, cultural background and different language speaking ability amongst the team. This country or most part of it is extremely multi-cultural and there are so many different nationalities amongst us. I believe that having people from similar backgrounds will improve communication.

Your staff should be recruited on their ability to be a firefighter.

I want the right person for the job, despite their race, sex, orientation etc

Every organisation needs a range of abilities and for those abilities to be recognised and valued.

The right person for the right job regardless of gender or race

Merit is all that matters, only select the best candidates - it doesn't matter what it looks like. Anything else is putting firefighters and the public's lives at additional risk. Additionally, EDI inevitably leads to anti-white/indigenous racism, misogyny, & heterophobia, it also damages social cohesion. This is Woke, cultural Marxist, nonsense.

The objective is sound, tangible evidence to measure progress in its achievement may be lacking however.



There is a great deal of published evidence that more diverse work forces are more successful - see:- McKinsey's May 2020 report, "Diversity wins: How inclusion matters". A summary of the report can be found at <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

Does 'job applicants' refer only to recruitment into the service? If yes, how do we plan to cover progression for those staff already employed? This feels like a common omission, whereby retention and progression seem to fall off the end.

always assuming staff are equal to the job in hand irrespective of Race Colour Creed Nationality or Sex

What scientific evidence do you have to support that diversity is helpful in a fire and rescue service? Appointments at all levels should be based purely on competency and ability rather than diversity targets. People from minority groups will start to feel self conscious that they are appointed because of their minority status rather than ability.

What is the measure of success for this? Is it the action taken or is it the number of applicants with diverse characteristics? This is important.

Its important that we are able to reflect the community we serve, However, what remains an absolute priority is that no change in standards occur to facilitate this happening.

Slough has a very mixed ethnic population so it is important to give any interested individual a chance to apply

An excellent objective to achieve

This should be in all work places

A more diverse workforce with the right skills presents a positive image to the public.

Right skills and behaviours = right candidate . Nothing else matters

As you say, a diverse workforce adds value to an organisation

Surely applicants should be employed by the behaviours and skills and not because you are simply ticking the box that isn't ticked yet. Whether that be by nationality, skin colour, accent or whatever other reason. Skills are the most important thing.

This may not always be possible, would focus more on the effort to drive diversity rather than the result.



Diversity doesn't necessarily mean different race, religion or gender, and you could have a watch of all 'white males' that are also diverse as they have different backgrounds and perspectives that add value to a team, that should also consider those that are neurodivergent

Not sure what you are meaning with the term diverse, as individuals we are all diverse? Are you stating certain jobs will only be open to specific persons to apply for. To achieve your outcomes this implies you will be discriminating in favour of particular groups.

An increase in diversity of staff at all levels can only benefit the organisation and better represent the community we serve

It is not just about seeking individuals with the right behaviours, but actively challenging unacceptable behaviours and publicise the examples of those who fail to uphold your aspirations and the sanctions taken.

Why should it be action be increased? If you can't already employ ethnic diverse people now with all the openness and diversity stuff what makes you think it will change anymore?

We are focussed too much on not upsetting anyone and we should just employ the right people, take the focus off of gender, sexuality or race etc

I agree you should be seeking a workforce representing the community but you must not stray into positive discrimination

This definitely needs work. There is a huge lack of understanding within the service and not enough training in certain areas

na

YES, however, the second part of that sentence should be remembered and actioned upon, "right behaviours and skills" not just an afterthought or a nice to have this is equally as important as the first part to me.

This needs to be rolled out within both uniform and corporate members of staff

Must still be fair.

I agree, however this should not descend into positive discrimination. The best staff should be sought regardless of any bias.

I support this but wonder how you will do it?

Berkshire has a diverse range of people and RBFRS should reflect this.



Objective 2

Absolutely! Spot on.
Excepted
the principles of this objective are honorable and definitely what should be happening, however i am aware of several occasions where employees from minority groups have been treated with more leniency. This appears to be out of fear on the behalf of RBFRS.
More woke nonsense
Of course if there are inequalities or unfair behaviours they should be tackled
I couldn't care less. I want people in the volunteer fire service who can put out fires, not waste their time on diversity.
This isn't a priority, competence in role is
But please see my response above
equality, diversity and inclusion DO NOT USE this sort of language for an objective. For an older generation it is difficult to understand and also laughable. From the top down the first duty of a manager is to manage and to lead by example correcting any that are not following the basic rules of good manners and business. Bad behaviour is dealt with through warnings and dismissals. Plain and simple.
Strong leadership skills set a good example
It is not an employer's role to tackle inequalities. That is the responsibility of wider society. I am all in favour, however, of inclusive behaviours including listening and encouraging participation. However, at the end of the day, leaders have to take decisions, which should be on an objective basis regardless of diversity as such unless an HR type issue.
Getting the work done and informing the public of what is right is more important than telling the public you are looking at diversity It should just happen
All people should be treated equally
The critical point is what action sits behind the EDI objectives ...perhaps a mention of the NFCC code of ethics maybe helpful
Can they do the job? Beyond that I do not care
Not quite sure who your organisational leaders, are they specifically your management? Regardless communication is the key and as long as there is open and honest dialogue then it can only lead to progression.



Without appropriate training opportunities and sanctions for those whose behaviour falls short - whatever their rank, this is going to be an objective that will be difficult to achieve

See previous comment

Ok to learn how to manage differences within team, accounting for culture ethnicity, learning / physical adjustment / age/ gender etc needs so long as all equally considered

It sounds good but EVERYONE needs to behave professionally- banter can still be racist, sexist, homophobic etc...it needs to be stamped out. Discriminatory behaviour needs to be challenged

As long as leaders don't operate in fear of diversity and inclusion as it can weaken an organisation very quickly. Remember there are individuals and groups seeking to undermine organisations using D&I anomalies.

But as always - who is represented at leadership? A SOP, if there is no diversity representation

I agree but this needs to be used in practice and not on only on paper

You are firefighters. That is your job. I don't care if you are equal, diverse or inclusive, I want you to be able to put out a fire.

If you give the best person the job and promote accordingly, that should be enough!

This should be mandatory for all organisations.

If managers stop micro managing and have trust and faith in their staff

More woke, divisive, cultural Marxist nonsense

This is really positive that leaders should take responsibility for tackling inequality, but I think some still need support and further training to understand this as many still don't 'practice what they preach' or see the value in commitment to EDI

The objective is one that will realise greater levels of engagement, providing for operational tools that allow access to SLT on a more consistent basis

Nothing happens if the leadership are not involved

What evidence do you have to support that your leaders aren't already tackling inequalities? Support your leaders in identifying talent, experience and ability regardless of minority group.

Seems like this objectives are the wrong way around. Suggest the objective is local communities and staff having confidence in the corporate commitment. Therefore put this at the top of the objective not at the end.



I like to know how many people are there in your leadership position and how many ethnic minorities

Eliminating covert racism, favouritism, encouraging open management is a positive way of supporting leaders.

How will measure whether this has been effective or not?

But please be aware that what you call inclusiveness, may be offensive to others (because of religion/beliefs) and balance that sensitively. Otherwise you risk further alienating some minorities while trying to prove inclusivity to others.

All people should be treated equally. Inequalities and exclusivity should be tackled in the workplace. It shouldn't mean though that people who are in management should be selected just because they are of a diverse nature. They should be selected because of their talent to manage.

All for equality. I did try to read through the behaviour competency but gave up, not sure it will mean much to the man on the street other than showing you are box ticking.

Lead from the front is a great maxim, but leaders and managers need to challenge the behaviours they see immediately and correct them, or the cultural norm will prevail. Weak leadership will turn a blind eye to hard decisions

Definitely important to have knowledge and understanding of the factors that effect everyone

Senior managers should be commuted to working with the community and proactively work with schools to promote the objectives

As per previous

above my pay scale, will do what is asked

It needs to be actions as well as words. Too often, objectives are written down and then put to one side.

Objective 3

Very true. The best public services are those which actively engage with and LISTEN to their communities! Very important.

Agreed

Working in a very diverse community I have always striven to make and maintain contacts in the local community, as I truly believe this helps all parties involved to gain an understanding of each other.



Woke nonsense

And the point is?

This needs to be organic and not forced, links are forged through shared experiences.

PLEASE re- word this objective it is too wordy and again not basic enough for the average person . YOU are a fire service at the end of the day DO NOT lose sight of that . The general public understand that you are there to provide a service and the services you provide. Why do you need to create stronger links with the community and especially target the most vulnerable. I agree you need to know what your staff are going to be faced with when visiting a home and you should have a tie in with the local social services and doctor surgeries but your objective sounds like you may favour a vulnerable individual more so over someone perhaps at greater risk.

Im not sure what this has to do with diversity?

This is supposed to be a fire and rescue service, not a social service. The aims and objectives should be around objective fire and rescue issues.

But i have some concerns with how this will be achieved. This needs resources and time committed to it which I don't feel we have in place. To target those groups we don't know about and the most vulnerable needs a specific team building trust and relationships on an on-going basis. I feel that we currently dont have a sufficient structure in place to support this.

The importance of linking in with third sector and infastructure organisations too

It should benefit the local area, it may s irrelevant if they are vulnerable, everyone should get the same service

How are you going to ensure that you can find those vulnerable people to target?

This is just HR dept waffle, trying to say the right thing. You won't connect with the community anymore than you have previously. The fire service is respected and to retain that respect they should just concentrate on providing a fire and rescue service to anyone that needs it, which as far as I can tell, this is what you are already doing

Fire service serves all of community, therefore equally answerable to all of community

A fire is a fire is a fire regardless of who the victims are and the target should be to serve the whole community.

Diverse communities are the most vulnerable? This is actually two different things - insulting and disingenuous as it is written



Please include awareness of hidden needs such as autism and adhd - and please use people from these communities for this training. I cannot stress how important this point is as there is so much misunderstanding even among professionals.

You are a fire service, irrespective of who you are, the fire service should give the same response, as a gay man, what different do I need to a nlack or asian or white person, you are there to fight fires

I would hope this would already be in place.

More woke, divisive, cultural Marxist, nonsense. There is no "community", diversity has destroyed the community and social cohesion

RBFRS is a long way away from achieving this objective.

Very important to do.

Appreciate these are high level objectives but very interested to know the 'how' ?

As long as it's all communities and not just your target minority groups

I agree with this

Being seen to support with safety information diverse communities will improve communication.

There are a lot of vulnerable people who feel they get overlooked, and so creating strong links and being in touch with the community, no matter who they might be, is very important.

The correct targeting of those most at risk, maintaining links with them and - where relevant - their community, is essential to deliver a wide benefit to the community. Delivery at community level should also improve appreciation of the importance of these activities as a core function and not an 'add-on'.

I would hope this was the case anyway?

I think this is really important as currently we do not have a good understanding of who our local communities are so are not able to tailor our activities to this.

we need to be creating and maintaining links to better represent and be welcomed into diverse communities

Those groups hard to reach may not know what help is available to them

Strongly believe action should be based on historic data not assumption



it's a bit of an assumption that we have a diverse local communities in the west of the county, I don't feel we do in comparison to other parts of the county such as east and central. That feels like a very generic statement. Targeting most vulnerable could be achieved by a referrals only basis when it comes to safe and wells

I agree this is an important area to focus on but I have heard this a lot over the years and then those links are very rarely made and carried through. Therefore if we are as a service committed to doing this, we must act on this rather than just talking about it.

This is vital, Berkshire is a very diverse county and this should be reflected in the community engagement.

Objective 4

Absolutely agree, all should feel valued and treated with dignity, regardless of ethnicity or sexual orientation

Absolutely. Top stuff. This will make for a very happy and committed work force.

Accepted

This should also include respect for those who do not agree with certain prevailing attitudes about, for instance gender, for moral religious or other grounds.

Ensuring that non-uniform and uniformed workers have the same respect, authority (with regard to grade) and include both in teams to deliver an objective

This is definitely how we should be work but again this needs to be applied fairly and consistantly across the board.

Anti-merit, anti-excellence, invariably anti-indigenous, anti -white, misandrist, heterophobic, and anti-Christian. Just recruit and promote people on merit.

Everyone should always be valued and treated equally.

Is it equality or equity?

Stop it. This woke nonsense. I'll have no respect for you if you continue in this way, and I won't be alone. Ironically, it shows you have no understanding of the local community if you don't get it.

A culture of excellence and competence would be far more useful

Artificial. Just a reminder you need to quickly weed out unacceptable behaviour from the start and you will end up with a happier working environment

Select the most qualified candidates wherever they come from



That should be a given for any employer

This is really important

This is vital.

The objective should be to create a culture of fairness and an objective of being the best at preventing fires and tackling them and rescuing people whatever condition they get into when they need help. This encourages too much navel-gazing and inward looking.

What *****, everyone should be treated with respect and dignity!

Maybe you could have a steering group. Made up of one person from each area who could meet and discuss or come up with ideas to improve motivation, culture to ensure inclusion and empower individuals.

The thing most likely to get in the way of this objective will be expecting new comers to join in with an existing culture. The culture of the organisation ha to expand in its expression so those who fall outside traditional social norms feel comfortable being themselves at work.

More HR waffle, it's meaningless. Just provide a fire a rescue service to whoever needs it, when they need it. The term 'inclusive culture' means that you will be excluding some part of society

Equality key,

It is very easy to change the balance of actions to far and destroy an organisation.

As long as they are competent in the first place.

Well isn't that how it should be?

This should already be a part of every organisation but there is always room for improvement.

Only works when everyone us treated the same regardless of background, race, gender and rank/role

DEI always drives anti-white/indigenous racism, misandry, heterophobia, and significantly reduces standards.

Again, the objective is sound. However, the organisation has not improved diversity across the workforce for a period spanning 20 years. For example, the most respected national voice in fire safety has recently left the organisation. He was from a BAME background, how are recruiting and retaining the best BAME people from our communities?

Actions are key for all these objectives and for tangible actions to take place.

sometimes harder than you think

When will you begin to do this?



As long as the white heterosexual male/female feels valued and you are not virtue signaling.

all I can offer is my best wishes to the success of this endeavour

I agree

Dealing quickly, firmly and fairly with any incidents will encourage staff to feel valued.

It is extremely difficult to have a culture where everyone feels valued and equal, as views vary due to religion, beliefs, or lack thereof. However, of course you should try so yes I broadly agree.

Everyone should be treated the same.

Yes this goes without saying, surely. However we cannot "create" a diverse workplace culture. This is still dependent on attracting and being attractive to a diverse general public, them applying for and being suitable for whichever role. We cannot just employ persons from a diverse background to fit this criteria.

Lead from the top and live the values, ensure managers challenge unacceptable behaviours and those who experience exposure to these behaviours must feel supported throughout the organisation. Take the hard decisions, do not be afraid to advise the formal route and not the informal one. Do not try to sweep under the carpet.

Shouldn't people already feel valued and treated within your brigade....its 2022 now

Sounds great

This is a given for any organisation

Being someone with a hidden disability, I agree with this however I am facing real struggles. Line managers who simply don't have a clue and cast assumptions. Managers who don't listen to the individual or disagree with what they say about their condition

Agreed

Unfortunately, there are too many instances where members of staff are not respected or treated with dignity.

Additional Comments

Excellent initiative. Well done

I agree with all of the above comments and agree that RBFRS want to succeed at this, however there is one element that makes it difficult for certain demographics which is the lack of varied working hours especially for operational staff.

no



Fire and rescue are demanding jobs and the focus needs to be on training and support don't let woke agenda's be the primary focus. But that's what I think!

Like most of the British public, I am sick to death of this woke, cultural Marxist, *****. If I am in an accident or a fire, I want the best, fittest, strongest, firefighters to arrive and rescue me. I will not give a ***** about diversity or inclusion at my hour of need. If I were a firefighter, I would only want the best, fittest, strongest, most robust, firefighters stood next to me in a serious incident - I would not want someone who was there simply because of their gender, sexuality, skin colour. You are putting the public and firefighters at unnecessary risk by your woke nonsense.

No

no

Stop the woke nonsense!

I hope this does not divert you from the work you are supposed to be doing

No

This is a terrible survey. Questions are framed to get the response you want. Shame on you

No

No

If only it was written in a way that could be understood by the not so clever.

No

The Service should focus on having the most capable people in their roles, irrespective of their colour, creed, ethnicity or other irrelevant considerations.

This diversity is background work to make sure the culture is right.

Decency and fairness are very important

They are good objectives but it's unclear what the targets are, how progress will be measured and whether culture change will be achieved

No

No

This is ***** ridiculous, just give a good fair service!

None

Engage with others who have long established policies and procedures. Engage your employees.

Be careful!

No

An awesome set of objectives, inclusion, recognition of diversity. Dignity and respect for all. What is there not to like about this eh?

Why nothing on recruitment, development or promotion of and for a diverse workforce

No

Regarding Q1 I wish to see the strongest candidate possible in each role - irrespective of gender or race.

What a waste of time and effort. Employ the best people for the job in a fair and competitive interview. As a gay man, I do not need gay fire fighters turning up if I had a fire!

Stick to what you do best at and cut the political rubbish, I want the best firefighters for the job

These are laudable objectives, but I feel that they are just 'saying what we want to hear' There seems to be little substance about how you're going to make this all happen.



Wokeness is a cancer in society, it is destroying the Armed Forces, police, and Fire & Rescue services.

When looking at the efforts of our neighbours, in particular LFB, it's frankly criminal that we haven't done more to recruit and retain more female and BAME staff to front our organisation to better reflect the communities we serve.

When we have high profile influencers working for us, we happily let them go.

The service has a long way to go to being able to produce tangible progress in this space, we need better recruitment but stronger retention too. I fear we're a generation away from improving our broken culture.

Objectives are important for all to take on board and actions are key for all this involved. Also, how will these actions benefit the communities the fire service serves, how will this be evident?

No

no apart from GOOD LUCK

I have seen organisations include diverse population in front level services but when you get to leadership position it is hard work and unachievable due to institutional racism even there are more qualified and skilled persons are available

The Fire Service does a hazardous job very well and also tries to keep people safe with information and smoke alarms. Well done.

Further information on how this will be implemented would be interesting and informative.

Of course we need to reflect the communities we serve. But also must not lose sight on the employees we already have and ensure their needs are being met. In turn not discount the achievements and good service we already provide.

As above, it is incredibly tricky balancing inclusivity as what one person considers correct, can be seen as very offensive to another person. And getting terms correct is difficult and can vary (one person might say "person with autism", then some get offended and say "not person with autism! It's autistic person" just as one very small example). Having a friendship group that includes meetups with people from 4 different major faiths plus those with no faith, fringe religions, neurodivergent people and neurotypical people, we find it easiest to avoid many subjects and focus on what we're all there for (children's activity). I would therefore suggest that avoiding virtue signaling on social media is important when trying to access ALL communities and potential employers, and stick to focusing on the main part of the job. This reduces the chance of inadvertently offending people. However, having information in more than one language, and hiring staff from more sectors of the community, has a huge impact.

If people were treated equally, without prejudice, then you wouldn't need to do this survey. I was brought up to see that we're all human and should treat people how you'd want to be treated yourself.

No

Equal opportunity should include those that have 'learning difficulties' such as dyslexia or autism when considering recruitment as there's no encouragement, support or promotion for those that come under that aspect of diversity and therefore doesn't mean inclusion for all! I would argue that those of that background can offer a different perspective that adds value to a team especially for the tasks required!



Personally I think we need more patience when addressing the community. Engaging with the black / people of colour I think will really benefit us as a service. We need to make them feel that they can be part of the service and that they will play a great part and do a great job. Make them aware that the roles are there for them too.

Are you able to provide any % of numbers that you are aiming to achieve per diverse group in relation to staff numbers and how will you know when you have reached your objective.

I think the objectives are clear and relevant, actions aligned to these objectives are key to bringing further improvements to service provision and workforce inclusion

I sometimes feel that the more companies concentrate on what makes people different and how to include them just creates more of a divide

No

No

none

no

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

Appendix B - EDI Benchmarking Information

In the wider context of the current revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives consultation, and subsequent review of related documentation – namely the EDI Action Plan and EDI Policy – work is underway to consider how data benchmarking can support our understanding of progress and areas for improvement in this work moving forward.

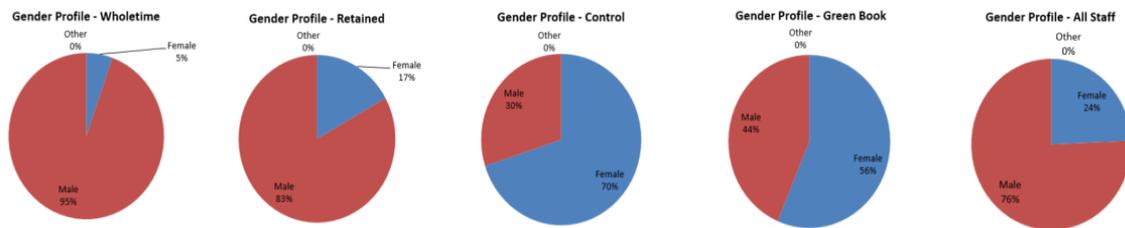
The information below provides an overview of some of the relevant demographic information with further work to be completed throughout 2022 to expand upon this.

Our Workforce – Current Position:

Please note RBFRS data reflects the workforce as of 31 December 2021.

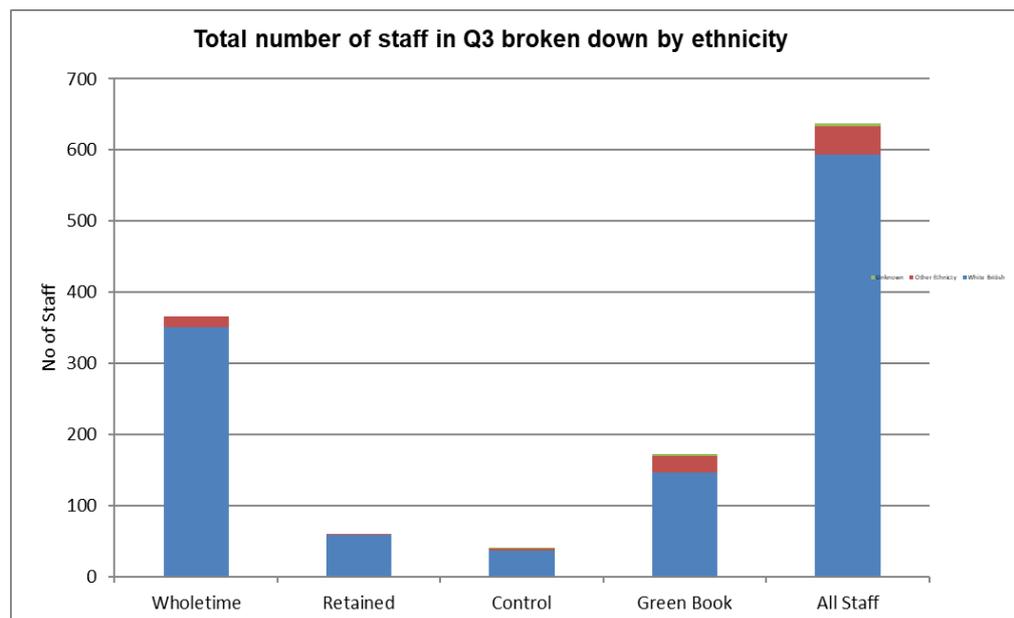
Gender

Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	All Staff
95% Male	83% Male	30% Male	44% Male	76% Male
5% Female	17% Female	70% Female	56% Female	24% Female



Ethnicity

	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	All Staff
White British	96%	98%	92.5%	85%	93%
Ethnic Minority	4%	2%	5%	13%	6%
Unknown	0%	0%	2.5%	2%	1%



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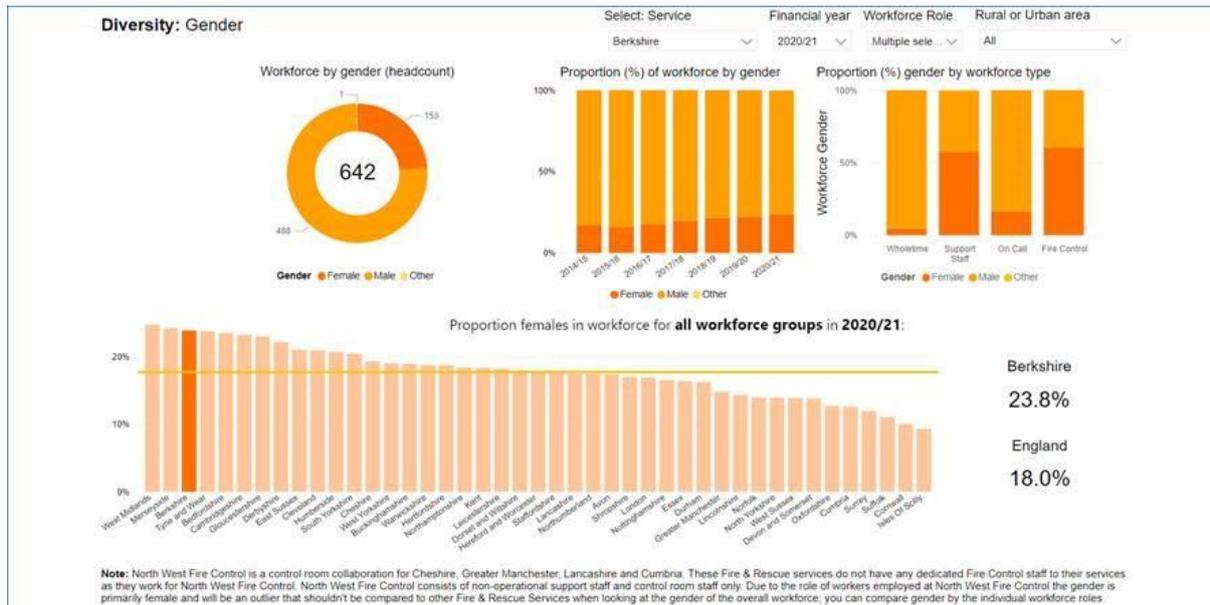
Appendix B

The Fire and Rescue Sector – Comparison Information 2020/21:

Data taken from HMICFRS.

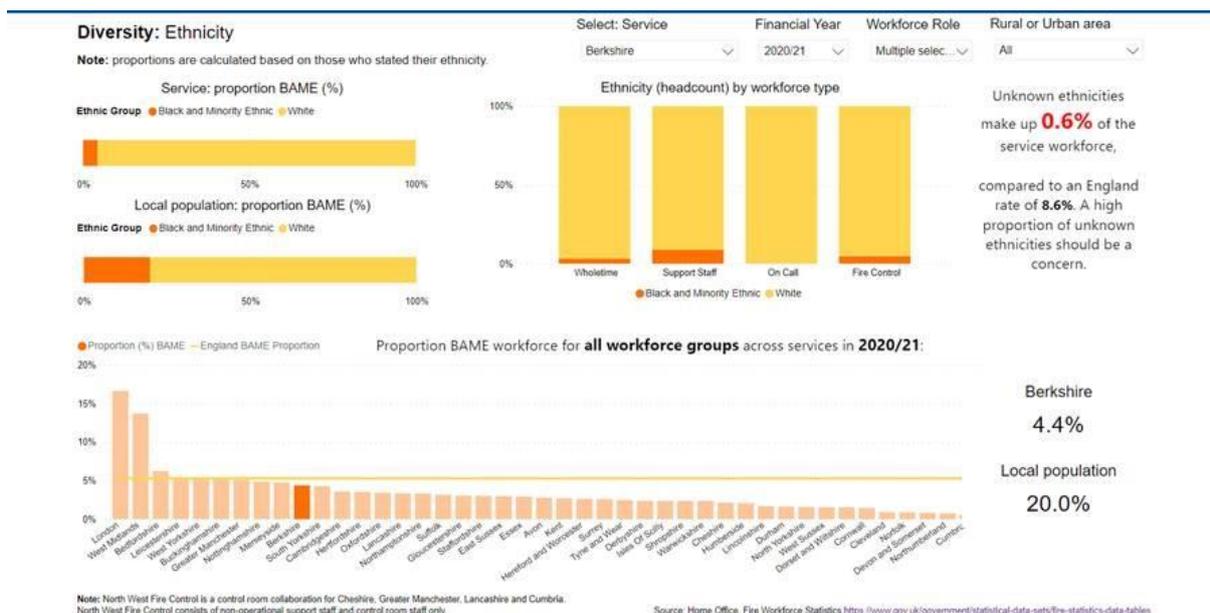
Gender

- Of all Fire & Rescue Services, RBFRS had the third highest proportion of females in the workforce across all workforce groups in 2020/21 – 23.8% compared to England average of 18.0%



Ethnicity

- Of all Fire & Rescue Services, RBFRS had the tenth highest proportion of ethnic minority groups (BAME) across all workforce groups in 2020/21
- 0.6% of service workforce is 'unknown' ethnicities, compared to England rate of 8.6%



Further Opportunities:

As part of the Five Shires collaboration (formed of Royal Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire fire and rescue services), we are seeking to create an informal benchmarking agreement regarding equality, diversity and inclusion. This will enable ongoing comparison across five services both in terms of quantitative information such as that outlined above, as well as exploration of qualitative indicators of success regarding the creation of an inclusive culture and an equal and diverse service.

The recently published NFCC Collecting and Disseminating of EDI Data Toolkit will also be examined to consider how this should be used with ongoing RBFRS activity. Coupled with information from the most recent census, which is due to be published later this year, we will be able to explore further avenues for revising our practice and use of equality monitoring in a number of areas. For example, updated census data will enable a review of previous analysis of demographics for areas around retained stations where individuals may be eligible, providing a clearer picture of demographic representation for each station.

It may be useful to note that the exploration of new avenues is set against the continuation of existing quarterly monitoring and reporting processes with regard to EDI data, including that which supports the identification of barriers, inequalities and relevant themes in order to inform activities to be undertaken as a result. This also includes ongoing annual reporting such as the Gender Pay Gap and additional Ethnicity Pay Gap analysis – although the Government is no longer expected to make the latter mandatory, RBFRS will continue to analyse such information in support of its EDI objectives.

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS CONSULTATION RESULTS - SUMMARY REPORT
LEAD OFFICER	KATIE MILLS, ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND JIM POWELL, AREA MANAGER, COLLABORATION AND POLICY
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DEXTER SMITH
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Fire Authority members with the results of the Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) consultation which ran from 17 January 2022 – 28 March 2022.
- 1.2 The results are presented in the summary report at Appendix A and will enable members to conscientiously consider the views of respondents prior to making a decision on the proposed changes to the way Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) responds to AFAs in lower risk, occupied, buildings.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** and **CONSIDER** the results of consultation as set out in the summary report at appendix A.
- 2.2 **AGREE** with officers’ recommendation to adopt Option A.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 At the Fire Authority meeting in November 2021, the Authority agreed to consult the public on changes to the way RBFRS responds to Automatic Fire Alarms.

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- 3.2 This is because 99% of the Automatic Fire Alarm calls are false alarms, placing a significant burden on the Fire and Rescue Service, with on average, 2,200 Automatic Fire Alarm calls attended every year that are false alarms.
- 3.3 The consultation proposed two options and are summarised (from page four of the summary report) as:
- 3.4 **Option A - change our current policy to help reduce the burden of false alarms on our Service.**

When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an automatic fire alarm sounding, we will ask the premises to confirm the cause of the alarm. As part of Option A in this consultation:

The second call back after 20 minutes is removed because the occupier will do their necessary fire safety checks and let us know if there is a fire.

- 3.5 **Option B - do not change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms**

If the alarm goes off and the occupier is unable to confirm the cause on the first call, we will ask them to check if there is a fire as part of their necessary fire safety checks. If a fire is still not confirmed, we will call again for a second time, after 20 minutes, and if it's still not confirmed, we will send a fire engine.

- 3.6 These options were described in detail, including the underpinning methodology, in the consultation document, ensuring sufficient information was available to allow intelligent consideration of the proposals (see appendix B).
- 3.7 RBFRS received a total of 468 responses to the consultation. The summary report looks at these responses in detail in relation to the proposals and also evaluates the profile of the respondents to support our understanding of how we interact with our communities.
- 3.8 The headline data shows the following responses in relation to the proposed options:
- 3.9 **62% of respondents preferred Option A** – to change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings.
- 3.10 **38% of respondents preferred Option B** – to keep the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms the same as it currently is.
- 3.11 Should the Fire Authority decide to adopt Option A, officers will put measures in place to evaluate the change for a 12 month period from the commencement date to identify if the service has achieved the expected benefits. This will be reported back to the Authority at an appropriate meeting in 2023/24.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 3 – We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4.3 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications in relation to the options set out in appendix A.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a legal requirement under Section 7(2)(c) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to “make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel”, in order to discharge its obligations under section 7(1) to extinguish fires in its area, and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area.
- 6.2 The legal obligations concerning the requirement to consult and how consultation should be conducted are set out in the ‘Legal obligations’ section of the consultation document. It defines the requirement to consult on CRMP matters as set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and describes the common law framework set out in the four Gunning Principles (R v London Borough of Brent [1985] 84 LGR 168).
- 6.3 Undertaking a public consultation will support the Fire Authority in determining that their decision making is proportionate, appropriate and reasonable.

7. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact assessment was carried out as part of the consultation and this is detailed within the summary report at appendix A.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The analysis of any implications were outlined in the consultation document (see appendix B). Essentially this change represents a very low risk to the public and should enable more time for other risk mitigation activity to occur, such as Safe and Well visits.
- 8.2 This proposal will not change the fundamental position that RBFRS will always mobilise resources where there is a confirmed fire.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 AFA mobilisations are managed and delivered by Thames Valley Fire Control Service. Currently RBFRS and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) have the same mobilisation protocols.

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- 9.2 Officers are working with partners in OFRS and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to understand the appetite to work towards an aligned policy for mobilising to AFAs. OFRS are developing proposals for their own consultation on responding to AFAs and it is likely similar options could be included.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer
10.2 Chief Finance Officer
10.3 Monitoring Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Item 11 – Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation; Fire Authority 2 November 2021.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation Summary Report
12.2 Appendix B – Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation Document.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Katie Mills millsk@rbfrs.co.uk 07831 812 131
13.2 Jim Powell powellj@rbfrs.co.uk 07774 215 664



Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation

Summary Report 2022



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Consultation Headlines

 **Total Responses**
468

 **'Easy Read' Responses**
3

 **Hard Copy Responses**
32

 **Survey**
433

Social Media Engagement

 **11,153 reached**
12,386 impressions

 **195 video views**

 **452 engagements**
25,890 impressions

 **622 video views**
3,011 impressions

 **404 video views**
5,047 impressions

 **21% of responses**
were from RBFRS staff

 **47% of responses were**
from residents

 **1,373 community**
contacts were emailed

 **69 engagements took place**
with the community

 **50% increase in responses**
overall compared to our last public
consultation

 **340% increase in responses**
from business owners compared to
our last public consultation

 **53% increase in responses from**
Organisations compared to our last
public consultation

 **4% increase in responses from**
residents compared to our last
public consultation



Executive Summary

This report summarises the main findings from the Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation, which was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA).

The consultation ran from 17 January 2022 – 28 March 2022.

The consultation, which ran for 10 weeks, asked for people's views on how their fire and rescue service responds to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) in lower-risk, occupied buildings such as shops, office blocks and factories. This is because 99% of the Automatic Fire Alarm calls are false alarms, placing a significant burden on the Fire and Rescue Service, with on average, 2,200 Automatic Fire Alarm calls attended every year that are false alarms.

The consultation did not propose any change to how we respond to AFAs in higher-risk buildings, where we would continue to send a fire engine upon notification of an alarm sounding and under both options in the consultation, a fire engine will always be sent when there is a confirmed fire.

During the consultation, we received 468 responses from various stakeholders. Details of respondents are included within the report, but overall, the data shows:

62% of respondents preferred Option A – to change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings.

38% of respondents preferred Option B – to keep the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms the same as it currently is.

This document provides information on how the consultation was conducted and presents an analysis of the data gathered. You can read in full the rationale for undertaking the consultation in the [Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation Document](#).

What We Consulted On

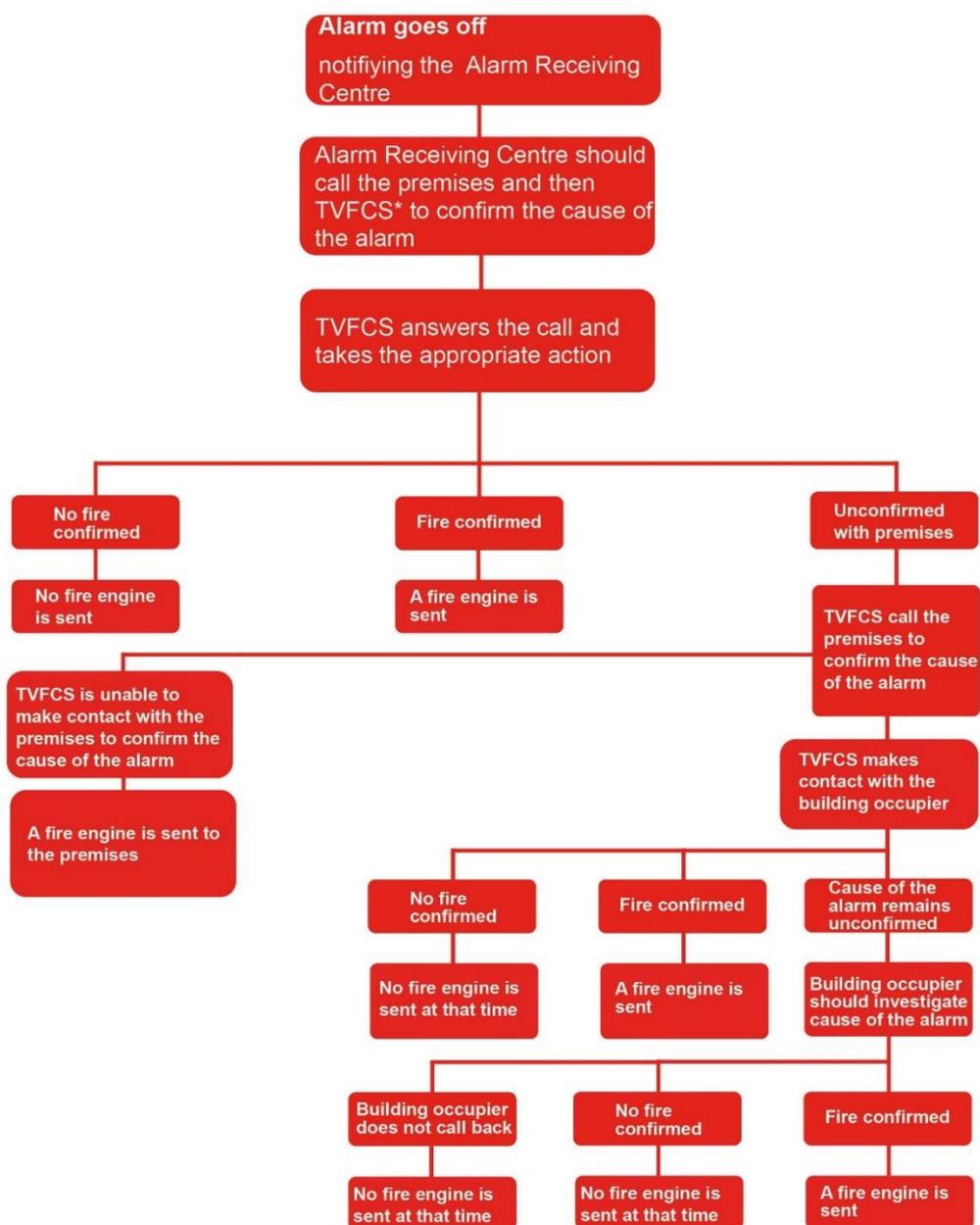
During the consultation, the Fire Authority encouraged as many people as possible to have their say on the two options, which were also made available in a variety of accessible formats and languages. The two options were:

Option A - change our current policy to help reduce the burden of false alarms on our Service (please see flow chart below).

When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an Automatic Fire Alarm sounding, we will ask the building to confirm the cause of the alarm. As part of Option A in this consultation:



- The second call back after 20 minutes is removed because the occupier will do their necessary fire safety checks and let us know if there is a fire.
- If there is a fire, we will send a fire engine.
- If we can't make contact with the building, we will send a fire engine.
- If they don't call back or confirm there is a fire, we won't send a fire engine at that time.



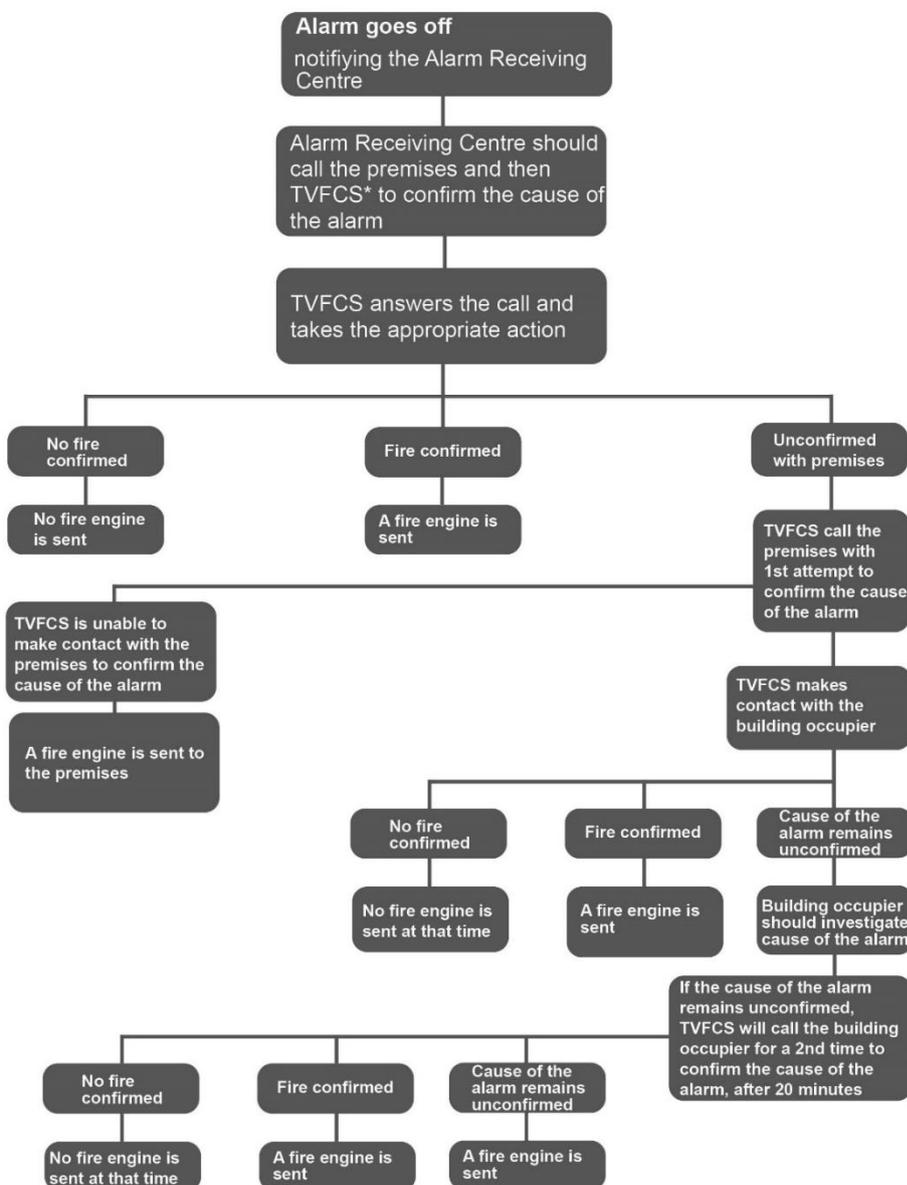
*TVFCS – Thames Valley Fire Control Service



Option B - do not change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms (please see flow chart below).

When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an Automatic Fire Alarm sounding, we will continue to apply our current policy and will not change the way we respond to AFAs. As part of Option B in this consultation:

- If there is no fire, we won't send a fire engine.
- If there is a fire, we will send a fire engine.
- If we can't make contact with the building, we will send a fire engine.
- OR if the alarm goes off and the occupier is unable to confirm the cause on the first call, we will ask them to check if there is a fire as part of their necessary fire safety checks. If a fire is still not confirmed, we will call again for a second time, after 20 minutes, and if it's still not confirmed, we will send a fire engine.





* TVFCS – Thames Valley Fire Control Service

The difference between these two options is removing the second call back by Thames Valley Fire Control Service after 20 minutes for lower-risk, occupied buildings because the building owner, responsible for fire safety would be completing their necessary checks, in line with their fire risk assessment.

Methodology

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory instrument that requires fire and rescue services (FRS) to have due regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Framework provides guidance on Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP), and suggests that a CRMP should:

“Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners.”

[Government consultation guidance principles](#) suggest that the length of consultation should be proportionate to the nature and impact of the proposals. This consultation period ran for 10 consecutive weeks from 17 January 2022 – 28 March 2022.

Depending on the nature of the proposals we are planning to take forward, we follow our own Organisational consultation principles:

- **Public Consultation:** We will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including the public on any changes, which are high-level issues that have a material impact on the performance of the services we provide, in accordance with our Consultation Strategy.
- **Internal Consultation:** When proposed changes do not materially affect the service we provide to the public, we will consult internally with our staff in line with agreed policies and procedures. For example, these changes could include changes to working patterns, changes to IT systems or changes to ways of working.

In carrying out the consultation, RBFRS also followed the legal principles that underpin consultation. These are known as the four ‘Gunning Principles’ which specify how public bodies should consult. They specify that:

- ✓ Consultation should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage;
- ✓ Sufficient information is provided to allow intelligent consideration of the proposals;
- ✓ Adequate time is given for response; and
- ✓ Responses are conscientiously considered before decisions are taken.

You can access [RBFRS’ Consultation Strategy](#) online.



Consultation Resources

The Automatic Fire Alarm consultation was widely publicised across the Service's digital channels, including social media platforms, website, intranet (available to RBFRS staff) and online and local media. This promotion was delivered, alongside in-person community engagement activity led by our teams across the County. Consultation materials were made available via a number of accessible methods.

These included:

- Online via rbfrs.co.uk/consultations.
- Social media.
- Local and online media.
- Hard copies of leaflets, posters and surveys.
- Information about the consultation was sent via email.
- Engagement events/ activity.
- Signposting via email.

In order to improve engagement with the consultation, specific community and business stakeholders were identified and contacted directly.

Communications

Website

A section was created on the RBFRS website on the 'Consultation' page. This included:

- An introduction, detailing what the consultation was focusing on.
- A short animated video, which explained what the current process is versus the proposed process that was being consulted on.
- Information on how people could take part in the consultation.
- A link to the survey.
- A link to the consultation documents.
- An 'Easy Read' version of the consultation document and survey.
- A large text format version of the consultation document.
- A plain text format version of the consultation document.
- A Punjabi, Polish and Urdu version of the consultation document and survey.
- An email address, postal address and telephone number to provide alternative methods of response.



- Details on accessibility for people requiring alternative formats or languages.

We had a total of 1,011 visits to the website page during the time the consultation was running and it was the 12th most popular page on the RBFRS website.

Throughout the course of the consultation, updates were added to the RBFRS website to remind people take part. One was added at the point of launch, at the midway point, with a week to go and finally, to confirm the consultation had closed.

Media

A press release was issued to media contacts at the beginning of the consultation on 17 January 2022, which provided details of the consultation and how to get involved, outlining the reasons for the consultation and the importance of residents having their say. Following this, the Communications and Engagement Team actively engaged with local media by phone to encourage coverage and promote the consultation to residents.

Social Media

To complement the channels above, social media was used throughout the consultation programme to enable respondents to share the information and to encourage engagement.

Information was posted on RBFRS' Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn pages at regular intervals, to encourage people to participate in the consultation. Information about the consultation was 'shared' in Facebook community groups, and key partner agencies and local groups, such as unitary authorities, were 'tagged' in Twitter posts to enable them to share the messages with their followers. The consultation information and how to take part was shared to over 60 community groups and just under 30 organisations were tagged on Twitter.

During the consultation, the following videos were shared:

- Animated video explaining the current and proposed process.
- A member of staff from the Community Risk Management Plan Team.
- A member of staff from Response.
- A member of staff from Thames Valley Fire Control Service.
- Crowthorne Fire Cadets.

These videos were published on our social media channels and in Facebook community groups, alongside a selection of social media cards that highlighted the key messages of the consultation.

Trialling New Methods of Communication

In order to continue to develop and evolve the way we communicate consultations to the public, we trialled two new methods this year to see if they supported better engagement and responses.



This was the first year we had created an animated video and wanted to try this method of communication to see if we saw improved engagement by comparison to previous consultations. During our last consultation, the launch video saw 106 views on YouTube throughout the entire consultation period. When compared to the animated video that was used for the Automatic Fire Alarm consultation, which saw 243 views on YouTube, we saw a 129% increase in views, demonstrating the animated video had higher engagement.

Separately, we trialled paid-for promotion on Facebook and Instagram of the Automatic Fire Alarm video, which resulted in 9,982 people being reached and 286 people clicking on the link to complete the survey. While we can't confirm a definitive link between the 286 people that clicked the link to complete the survey and this resulting in completed survey responses, we understand that this may have had a positive impact on the overall response rate which is 50% higher than our last public consultation.

Analytics

We saw positive engagement through the analytics for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

Impressions refers to the number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not. Reach refers to the number of unique users who saw your content.

- Our 14 Facebook posts resulted in 11,153 people being reached and 12,386 impressions.
- Collectively, between organic and paid-for Facebook posts, we reached 21,135 people in total.
- From the over 60 community groups we posted in, they have approximately 400,000 members, which we may have reached. Due to the page set up, there no way of formally tracking the engagement or reach of this so the above figure is indicative.
- On Instagram, we had 195 views on the consultation video and used 'Insta stories' to continually promote the consultation throughout the 10 weeks.
- In total, our 37 Twitter posts received 25,890 impressions and had 452 engagements.
- Our 12 LinkedIn posts achieved 3,011 impressions and 622 views on the video content published through this channel. The content here was a combined use of both the videos and static social media assets and the engagement is tracked only through LinkedIn.
- Our five videos posted throughout the duration of the consultation, including the animated video, received 404 views on YouTube and 5,047 impressions. The last consultation we ran shared two videos on YouTube which had combined views of 177 views which means the videos for this consultation overall saw 128% more views.

Consultation Activity

Throughout the consultation period, community engagement activity was carried out by teams across the Service to support responses:

- Letters and emails were sent to 1,373 community contacts across a broad range of organisations, from schools to faith groups and disability organisations. This wide range of



contacts was used in order to encourage as many areas of our community as possible to take part in our consultation – particularly those who have been under-represented in our consultations in previous years.

- Details of the consultation were shared with local authorities to include in their residents' newsletters.
- Letters were sent to partner agencies and contacts, including neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, the Leaders of the unitary authorities, the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, MPs and Town and Parish Councils. Representative bodies including the Fire Brigades Union, Fire Officers Association, National Fire Chiefs Council and Unison were all sent letters and invited to respond.
- A variety of engagement activities were undertaken at a Hub level throughout the period of the consultation. There were 69 separate actions completed by Service Delivery staff from Prevention, Protection and Response, as well as, RBFRS volunteers. The activities comprised visits to local businesses and trading estates, contact with schools and promotion through fire station social media accounts.
- Fire crews took the opportunity to promote the consultation while carrying out their usual duties and often combined this work with activities such as risk information gathering.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

RBFRS recognises the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and operates in accordance with our [EDI Objectives](#). These Objectives are currently being reviewed following a recent public consultation to ensure that they consider the priority areas set out by the National Fire Chiefs Council Equality Framework.

In line with consultation best practice, at the beginning of our consultation process, we created an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), which we have continually reviewed and updated where needed.

This EIA ensures that we are aware of the risks and impact of our work on individuals or groups who are protected under the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and the methods we can do to mitigate these risks. The intent of the EIA is to ensure that we are aware of the risks and impacts of our work on individuals or groups who share protected characteristics, and other non-statutory social characteristics as identified within our documentation (such as rurality, homelessness and those with caring responsibilities). A copy of this is available upon request.

For this consultation, building on our previous consultation activity and seeking continuous improvement, we felt it was extremely important to ensure our documentation and survey could both be accessible in multiple formats to support engagement from as many individuals as possible.

For this, we worked with an external organisation who created an 'Easy Read' version of our consultation document. An 'Easy Read' version was one way we made the information more accessible to people with learning disabilities by using short, simple sentences with pictures. This



document was then presented to a focus group of individuals who also had a learning disability and adapted based on their feedback to ensure they were understandable and accessible.

Additionally, translations in Punjabi, Polish and Urdu were also made available during the consultation, alongside a large text and plain text formats. These languages were selected as according to the 2011 Census data, they were the top three languages, outside of English, spoken in Berkshire. Additionally, we have Google Translate as a built in function on our website, making the consultation material available in up to 108 languages. Further translations of the consultation document could also be made available upon request.

During the consultation process, we were also able to analyse our ongoing response rate from various groups through the EDI data we collected through Survey Monkey. This enabled us to assess where we may need to target more specific communication work and adapt our strategy as the consultation progressed. As a result, we completed targeted activities to increase the response rate from Slough as this was consistently low.

Analysis of Data

The majority of the data was gathered via an online survey conducted using 'Survey Monkey'. Additionally, some hard copies of the survey were completed by the local community during engagement activity. All data was anonymised in line with best practice.

Quantitative data was used in a number of ways during this consultation. Our Survey Monkey platform enabled us to provide an indication of response rate to the survey, including skipped questions and impartial completions. It also provided:

- Equality and diversity information to analyse the demographic profile of respondents.
- An indication of the capacity in which the respondents were replying, such as an individual resident of Royal Berkshire or on behalf of an organisation.
- The overall percentage of responses who preferred Option A or B. This indicated the weight of preference from the respondents in total. We also broke this data down to look at responses from individual groups to further examine the findings.

Open-ended questions were used to enable respondents to provide individual and specific feedback on the consultation proposals.

Data was analysed using coding methodology; common themes in the feedback were highlighted and patterns in responses are available in the summary of themes section.

A sample of the feedback received under both Option A and B are included in the following sections. In order to remain transparent and impartial, we have ensured that due consideration was given to all feedback collected, analysing comments using coding methodology, before the most representative were collated for this report.



Responses to Consultation

We received 468 responses to the consultation in total. These responses were comprised from the following methods:

- 433 responses were received from our online survey monkey.
- Three responses via our online Easy Read Survey Monkey tool.
- 32 hard copies of the survey were completed during community engagement activity.

468 responses was a 50% increase in responses since our last public consultation that was held in 2020.

In order to ensure honest and open feedback, organisations were not required to detail which organisation they were responding on behalf of, however, from the organisations that did provide this, we know we've received responses from:

- Reading Borough Council.
- Leicester Fire and Rescue Service.
- Brookside Group Practice.
- Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.
- Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service.

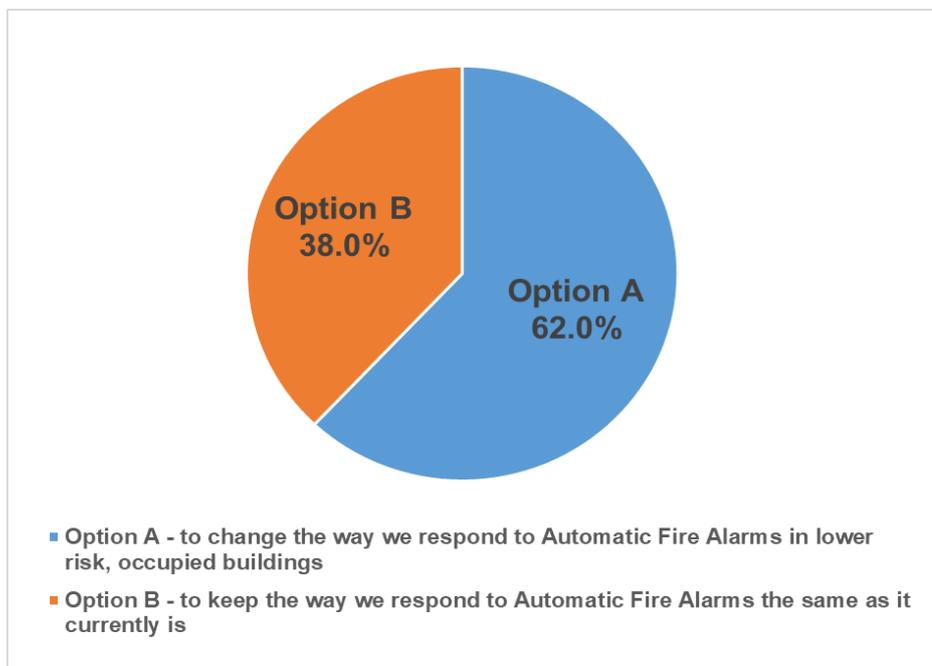
The tables and figures below illustrate the demographic profile of the respondents who gave their feedback to the consultation through our Survey Monkey platform. We have collated our responses from both our Survey Monkey survey and 'Easy Read' version.

Within our data reporting, we have noted the number of questions that were answered, as well as the number of questions skipped. We have presented this data in order to be transparent. We felt that it was important that respondents did have the option to skip questions, in order to encourage participation and a higher response rate. If we were not to allow respondents to skip questions, we may have achieved a lower response rate or missed an opportunity to collect data and feedback about our proposals across the survey.



Main Findings

Option A or B



The data shows that:

- 62% of respondents preferred Option A – to change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings.
- 38% of respondents preferred Option B – to keep the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms the same as it currently is.

This is reflected in the below table by respondents:

Please note: the total number of respondents highlighted below is 367 out of the total number of survey responses received. This is because respondents were allowed to skip questions as good practice suggests this is appropriate for consultations to ensure better response rates.

Preferred Options		
Respondent type	Number of respondents (Option A)	Number of respondents (Option B)
Business owner	15	7
On behalf of an organisation or representative group	26	18
RBFRS Staff member	72	31
Resident	86	67
Work in Berkshire	20	12



Other (please specify)	6	7
Total	225	142

Business owners, organisations, RBFRS staff and residents were all in favour of Option A. Conversely, people who work in Berkshire were more in favour of Option B.

There was a less than 1% point variation between male and female respondents in preference in favour of Option A or Option B.

Summary of Themes

Option A

A number of common themes were identified amongst the comments entered by respondents via Survey Monkey that preferred Option A. Responses collected by Survey Monkey were analysed and coded to identify key themes around the proposal, which included:

- **Saving RBFRS time** (80 mentioned it).
- **Free up resources for other work** (66 people mentioned it).
- **Cost saving from not responding to false alarms** (60 people mentioned it).
- **The duty of the Responsible Person to comply with their fire safety measures** (45 people mentioned it).
- **More efficient ways of working** (34 people mentioned it).

These core themes from respondents who preferred Option A are reflected in the below comments that were detailed in the open-ended question.

None of the respondents that chose Option A indicated a concern about increased risk. Narrative answers focused on the benefits including:

“I work in a residential care home for adults with learning disabilities. As much as we try to practice evacuations with the people we support, if we were to have a fire we may need someone to be rescued. Clearly, in this scenario we need a fire engine here as soon as possible, if they are attending an empty office it is putting lives at risk.”

“It would appear that there are a huge number of false alarms. In lower-risk buildings, your Option A will hopefully reduce wasted time and ensure that fire engines can attend emergencies on less time and hopefully save lives.”

“It allows firefighters to use their time more efficiently and thus improve fire safety throughout the County.”

“I have chosen Option A due to the time savings which enable firefighters to spend more time on other activities and enable improved availability of fire engines for actual emergencies. Based on the data presented, the risk associated with making this change appears low.”



201 respondents also provided additional comments in a free text question. In the additional comments section, nine people stated that it is the duty of the Responsible Person at the premises to manage their building and its alarm system. Eight people added comments, which called for further fire safety and Protection education and consultation to support both the change and the Responsible Persons who will have to adjust to it.

Those who had selected Option A added the following additional information:

“Consultation and collaboration with building owners/managers/ARC's also appears to be a critical component to reducing the number of non-required call-outs.”

“These types of changes always take years to filter out to the people affected so a good marketing campaign will be required.”

Respondents who chose Option A were positive in their decision and used the free text option in Question 4 to reaffirm their choice:

“Really good idea. Hope it happens.”

“Please implement the changes as soon as possible. I just can't understand why you go to so many false alerts.”

“A review of how Fire & Rescue Service's respond to Automatic Fire Alarms is well overdue.”

Option B

A number of common themes were identified amongst the comments entered by respondents via Survey Monkey that preferred Option B. Responses collected by Survey Monkey were analysed and coded to identify key themes around the proposal, which included:

- **Change will increase the risk of fire** (75 people mentioned it).
- **The Responsible Persons on the premises may be incapacitated by fire** (24 people mentioned it).
- **The building may not be able to confirm if there is a fire** (15 people mentioned it).
- **The onus is on the Responsible Persons/ fire wardens** (Nine people mentioned it).

These core themes from respondents who preferred Option B are reflected in the below comments that were detailed in the open-ended question.

Additional comments made by respondents who chose Option B expressed concern that the proposed changes were a cost-cutting activity that placed savings over safety:

“Safety of buildings and residents is paramount.”

“Option A appears to have an increased level of risk because if you don't hear back, you assume everything is ok which is an unsafe conclusion to draw.”



“There is no guarantee that the occupiers have not been overcome during the investigation of the alarm.”

“Always best to be on the safe side and saves time as you'll never know whether it's a false alarm or not. I'd rather have a fire engine turn up, confirm that all is well and there's no fire situation.”

13 people suggested that RBFRS should consider charging for attendance at false alarms. Of these, three were RBFRS staff members, eight were residents and the remainder worked in Berkshire or were in the 'other' category. No business or organisational respondents referenced the notion of charging for attendance at AFAs.

The data indicated that 23 respondents indicated in the open-ended text fields either felt that the wording of the consultation was unclear or, in answering demonstrated that they did not clearly understand the nature of the proposed change. For example:

“Option B I think, but I found the phrasing a bit confusing.”

“Not sure.”

“It isn't clear from this survey if the automatic response is for businesses or homes? I would want all alarms to be investigated and an engine sent if the service cannot contact the owner for any reason.”

There was also commonality between respondents who chose Option A and B regarding a desire to see further provision of Protection education to support improved fire safety.

“Take the opportunity to advise the owner of improving detection.”

“You need to do more to educate people about how to make their buildings safe. They need help and advice, it's not enough just to go to fewer alarms. You need to do this AND help people to have safer buildings.”

“Building investigation training should be given to all occupiers to reduce risks of injury.”

“The time saved should be spent educating Responsible Persons of their requirement to ensure fire safety in these premises. We still meet so many tenants/occupiers/owners of buildings who don't understand their responsibilities regarding fire risk assessments so time should be used to visit premises.”

Thames Valley Fire Control Service

13 members of staff who identified as being from Thames Valley Fire Control responded to the consultation. All 13 chose Option A and were in favour of changing the way we responded to Automatic Fire Alarms.

“I chose Option A as this will make it more efficient responding to fire alarm calls and takes away the need to chase a site after 20 minutes, especially if it is busy with incidents in the control room at the time.”



“I have chosen Option A because it is a far more practical way of working from a control room perspective - trusting the Responsible Persons on site to confirm if there is a fire or no fire at the premise.”

“Option A as occupier is capable of doing the necessary checks and calling back the fire service if required. The requirement to call back the premises in Option B after 20 minutes is not always a workable process and can easily be missed due to other operational needs in the control room.”

Question 4 offered the opportunity to add additional free text comments. Three TVFCS staff members took this opportunity to suggest that a collaborative effort should be carried out to align AFA policy across all three partner fire and rescue services.

Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service confirmed that it responded to the consultation via the survey, stating that it agreed with the Option A proposal, and that it will free up more time for community fire safety, protection, operational risk gathering activity and training. This response is included in the overall survey responses.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service confirmed that it responded to the consultation, supporting Option A. In its response, it highlighted that it would not see any benefit in Option B given that if a Responsible Person is unable to identify the cause of a fire within 20 minutes, then it is likely that the cause would be an unwanted fire signal. Should a fire have occurred it is also likely that a second detector head would have activated. Given this and the buildings that the consultation relates to being low-risk premises, then the building's passive and active fire safety measures should be sufficient and the likelihood of spread between compartments is diminished.

Representative Bodies

The Fire Brigades Union, Fire Officers Association and UNISON were all contacted during the consultation period and were encouraged to respond. No formal responses have been identified as being from the representative bodies.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring

In Appendix A, we have presented the raw data comparison of EDI data from this consultation and the CRMP Strategy Consultation of 2020. This data is provided to show how we have changed and modified the way in which we collect EDI data through more inclusive answer options, to better represent the diversity within the communities we serve. As such, making direct comparisons is challenging as the questions asked and options offered have changed over time. For example, in relation to gender we presented six options, as opposed to seven in the previous consultation. Additionally, we didn't ask respondents in the 2020 consultation which unitary authority they lived in when responding to the consultation.



Within this consultation, we also expanded the opportunity for respondents to self-describe. This has been offered to increase the inclusivity of the consultation, ensuring that all respondents are able to describe themselves in the language they wish to use, whilst simultaneously indicating where we may have missed opportunities to add sufficient options to represent the fullest range of possible answers. For this consultation, the [NFCC Equality of Access documents](#) were reviewed to ensure that due consideration was given to how we could engage with different groups of people across the County to make a positive difference. For future consultations, we will be considering how we can continue to develop the accessibility and inclusivity in line with good practice and the NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Project Team national guidance.

We are continually working to improve the way in which we reach and engage with different groups across Royal Berkshire. In the future, we will be considering further the pre-engagement work we may be able to do with different groups within our County to inform our consultation activity and promote inclusivity within our work with the public. We continue to be committed to promoting diversity and inclusion across the work that we do at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Figures used for representation of the population of Berkshire are taken from the most recent [National Census in 2011](#), as well as The Office for National Statistics. We await the publication of the next Census, later this year and will use it to inform our understanding of the community we serve.

Respondents Profile

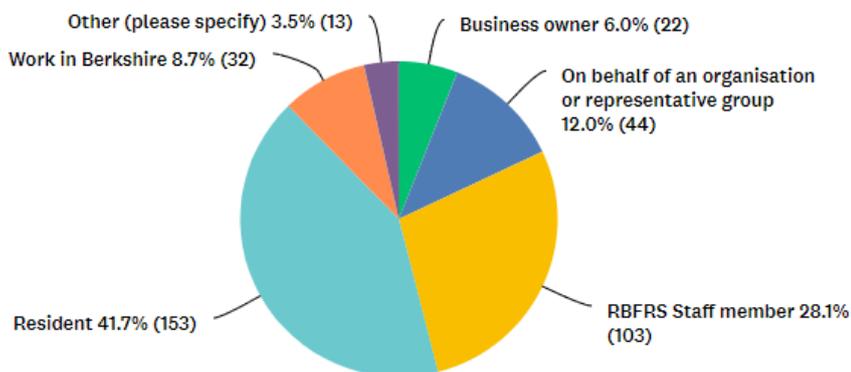
The figures below illustrate the demographic profile for all responses via the Survey Monkey questionnaire. RBFRS is committed to promoting equality and diversity, and therefore by collecting this information we are able to monitor the response rate to our consultation across a range of communities and backgrounds. This enables us to continually evaluate our work and to improve efforts to engage a representative sample of people within Royal Berkshire as a process of ongoing development.



Response Capacity

Are you responding as:

Answered: 367 Skipped: 98



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Business Owner	6.0%	22
On behalf of an organisation or representative Group	12.0%	44
RBFRS Staff member	28.1%	103
Resident	41.7%	153
Work in Berkshire	8.7%	32
Other	3.5%	13
Total		367

The data showed that:

- 41.7% of respondents identified themselves as a resident of Royal Berkshire.
- 28.1% of respondents identified themselves as working for RBFRS.
- The smaller representation came from those who identified as a business owner.

In comparison to the previous consultation, we asked respondents to confirm which capacity they were responding to the consultation in the same way as previously captured. We did see an increased response rate from business owners, those who were responding on behalf of an organisation and those who worked in Berkshire. This may suggest that our targeted communication work towards these groups encouraged positive uptake and engagement. These figures showed:

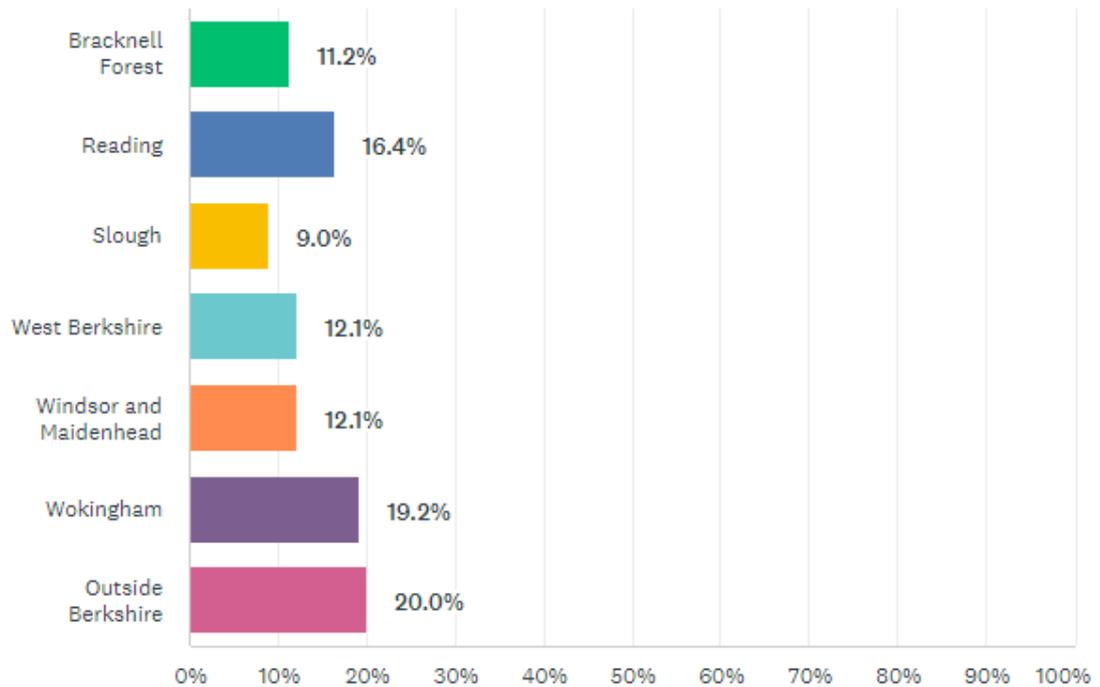
- 633% increase in responses from business owners compared to CRMP strategies consultation. This is an increase from three to 22 responses from businesses.
- 100% increase in responses from respondents on behalf of an organisation compared to CRMP strategies consultation.
- 28% increase in responses from residents compared to the CRMP strategies consultation.



Unitary Response Rates

Where do you live?

Answered: 365 Skipped: 100



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Bracknell Forest	11.2%	41
Reading	16.4%	60
Slough	9.0%	33
West Berkshire	12.1%	44
Windsor and Maidenhead	12.1%	44
Wokingham	19.2%	70
Outside Berkshire	20.0%	73
Total		365

The data shows:

- 19.2% of people who responded selected Wokingham as where they live and this was the highest.
- 9.0% of people who responded selected Slough and this was our lowest response rate.

The highest rate of response per unitary authority was Wokingham, Reading and Bracknell Forest respectively. Lower levels of response from both Slough Borough Council and West Berkshire

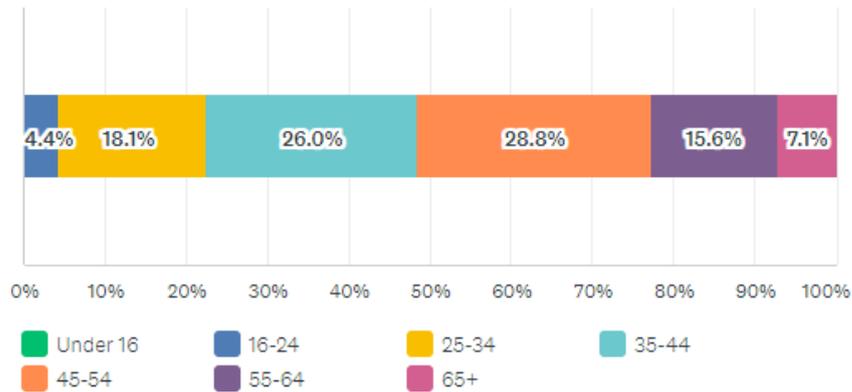


Council's population indicate that future consultations may address an equality of access issue to increase engagement.

Age

What is your age?

Answered: 365 Skipped: 100



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Under 16	0.0%	0
16-24	4.4%	16
25-34	18.1%	66
35-44	26.0%	95
45-54	28.8%	105
55-64	15.6%	57
65+	7.1%	26
Total		365

The data showed that:

- 28.8% of the respondents identified their age as between 45-54 years old.
- The smallest number of respondents came from those aged between 16-24 (4.4%), however this is still an improvement from our previous consultation that saw 0% of respondents within this age category suggesting an improvement in how we engaged with this group.

The average age in Berkshire is 38.9 years old¹. Whilst we did not collect the average age of respondents within this consultation, we saw an increase of 35% in those selecting the 25-34 age bracket when compared to previous consultations, giving us a more even proportion of responses.

¹ ONS census data

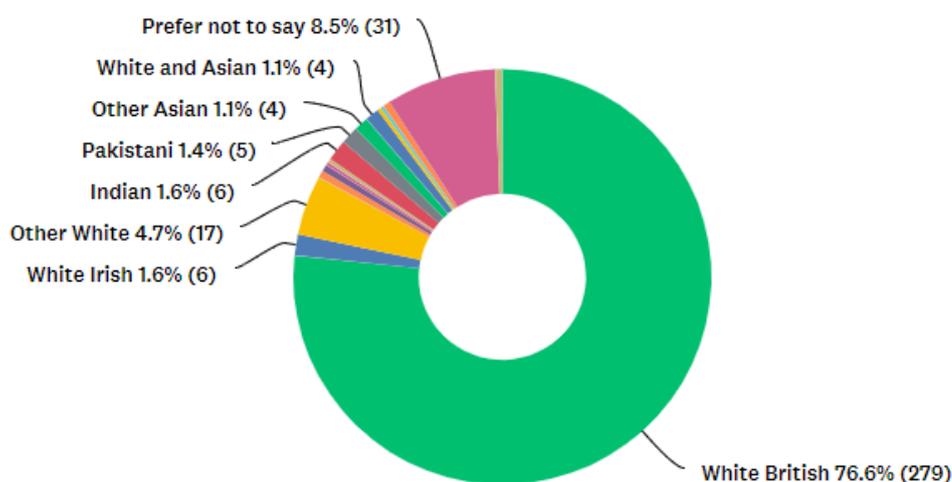


Overall, it is challenging to draw a direct comparison from response rate by age, relative to the population of Berkshire as the ONS data does not correlate directly with the options respondents had as part of this consultation.

Ethnicity

Which of the following best describes your Ethnic Group

Answered: 364 Skipped: 101



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
White British	76.6%	279
White Irish	1.6%	6
Other White	4.7%	17
Black African	0.0%	0
Black Caribbean	0.5%	2
Other Black	0.5%	2
Bangladeshi	0.3%	1
Chinese	0.3%	1
Indian	1.6%	6
Pakistani	1.4%	5
Other Asian	1.1%	4
White and Asian	1.1%	4
White and Black African	0.3%	1
White and Black Caribbean	0.3%	1
Other Mixed	0.5%	2
Unknown	0.0%	0
Prefer not to say	8.5%	31



Prefer to self-describe	0.5%	2
Total		364

The data showed that:

- 76.6% of the respondents identified their ethnicity as White British.
- 4.7% of the respondents identified as other White.
- 1.6% of the respondents identified as Indian.
- 8.5% of people preferred not to say with 0.5% preferring to self-describe.

We provided more diverse and inclusive answer options in this consultation. As such, we saw responses from a number of different groups, which enabled individuals to specify more clearly their ethnicity. We have seen a slight uplift in some categories.

The proportion of those that prefer not to state their ethnicity has decreased compared to the 2020 consultation. This is positive as this shows people either felt more able to describe themselves in the categories offered or were more willing to do so.

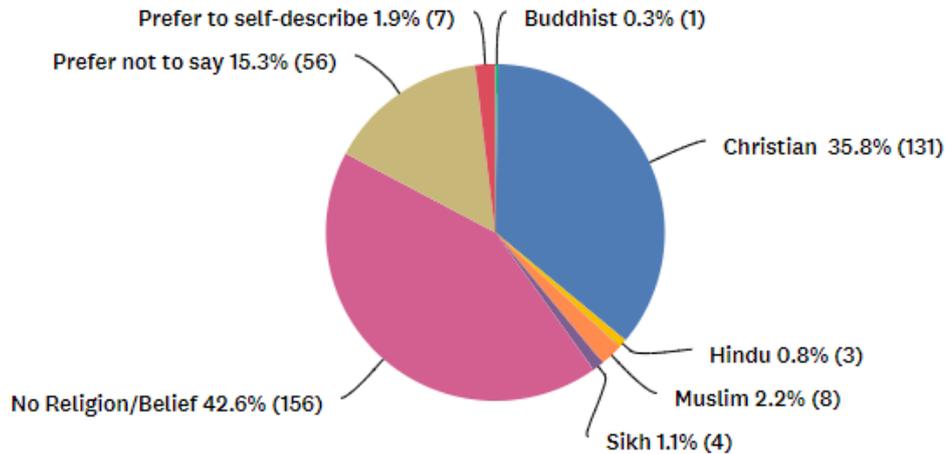
Census data on ethnicity shows that 80% of Berkshire residents identify their ethnicity as White and ONS data shows that 13% of Berkshire identify their ethnicity as Asian/Asian British. It is challenging to compare this data to our own response rate as we provided more detailed response categories in comparison to the Census ethnicity options. These categories were consulted upon with our EDI Co-ordinator to ensure good practice. However, we can broadly suggest that our response rate of 71.63% of White British is broadly reflective of our local communities, but there is still work to be done to ensure our response rates reflect the community we serve and to ensure seldom heard groups are engaged in our consultations.



Religion or belief

Which of the following best describes your Religion or belief

Answered: 366 Skipped: 99



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Buddhist	0.3%	1
Christian	35.8%	131
Hindu	0.8%	3
Jewish	0.0%	0
Muslim	2.2%	8
Sikh	1.1%	4
No Religion/Belief	42.6%	156
Prefer not to say	15.3%	56
Prefer to self-describe	1.9%	7
Total		366

The data shows:

- 42.6% do not have a religion or belief.
- 35.8% of respondents are Christian.
- 21.3% of respondents skipped this question.

Data from the [2011-2018 Religion by Local Authority from ONS](#) tells us that 8% of the population of Berkshire identify their religion as Muslim. Within this consultation, we received 2.2% of responses from this group. Those that identify their religion as Hindu comprise 4% of Berkshire's population, again indicating that individuals from these groups are not proportionally represented in this consultation.

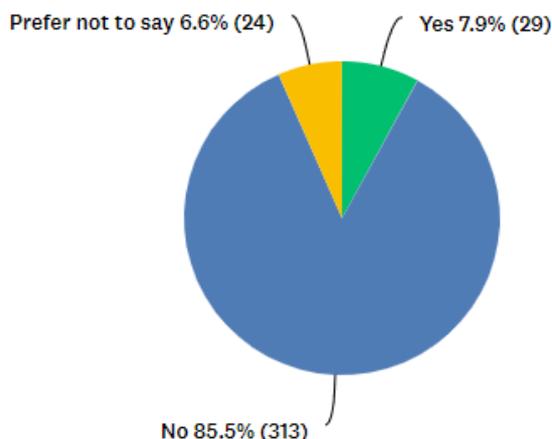


This suggests that in the future, RBFRS needs to ensure appropriate targeted engagement, and consideration of how reflective this is of diversity in specific areas of the County, to better represent the views of the community we serve. However, the response rate from those identifying as Muslim has improved on the 2020 consultation where no responses were received.

Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Answered: 366 Skipped: 99



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Yes	7.9%	29
No	85.5%	313
Prefer not to say	6.6%	24
Total		366

The data showed that:

- 85.5% considered themselves as not having a disability.
- 7.9% considered themselves as having a disability.
- 6.6% preferred not to say.

In comparison to our previous consultation, we collected this data in the same way and the data suggests there has been an increase in respondents with a disability.

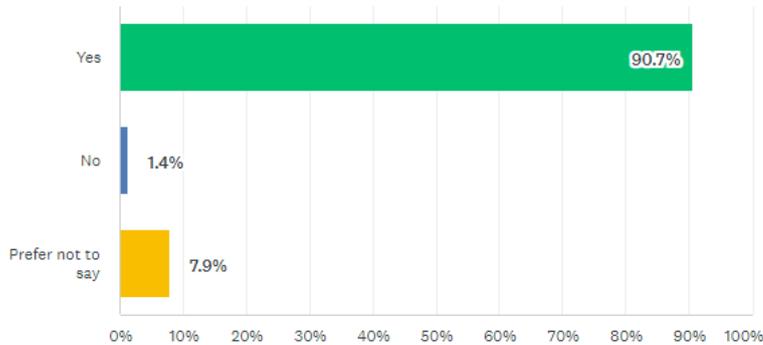
Data from the 2011 Census tells us that 7.32% of Berkshire residents have some limitations on their day-to-day activities. The percentage responses received and the Census data are broadly similar. For future consultation activity, this data has highlighted the continued need to work towards a more representative response from those who identify as having a disability and that we may focus our engagement strategy to encourage more participation from this group.



Gender Identification at Birth

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Answered: 365 Skipped: 100



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Yes	90.7%	331
No	1.4%	5
Prefer not to say	7.9%	29
Total		365

The data shows:

- 90.7% of the respondents identify themselves with their gender at birth.
- 7.9% respondents preferred not to say.
- 1.4% of respondents stated that they did not identify as the same gender as at birth.

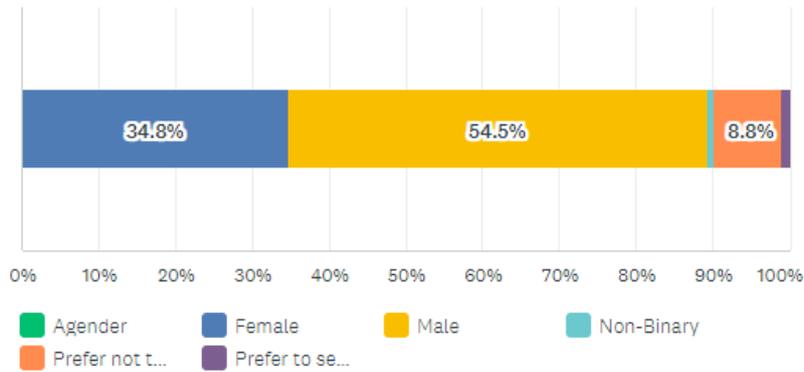
This measure has not been used in previous consultations and the Census data, which will include this information will not be published until later in 2022 so there is no comparative measure available.



Gender Identity

Which of the following best describes your gender identity

Answered: 365 Skipped: 100



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Agender	0.0%	0
Female	34.8%	127
Male	54.5%	199
Non-Binary	0.8%	3
Prefer not to say	8.8%	32
Prefer to self-describe	1.1%	4
Total		365

The data shows:

- 54.5% of respondents were male with females comprising the second highest amount of responses at 34.8%.
- 8.8% of respondents preferred to not provide a gender descriptor.
- 0.8% of respondents described themselves as non-binary.
- 1.1% of respondents chose to self-describe.

ONS data from 2020 estimates that the population of Berkshire is roughly a 50/50 split of male and female. In this consultation, the proportion of overall responses from women was not representative, and is 7.9% lower than the previous consultation. Improvement in this area should be sought in future consultations.

We didn't have any responses from non-binary respondents in our last consultation, so it is positive to see an increase in this area. Those that prefer not say are broadly similar to our last consultation.

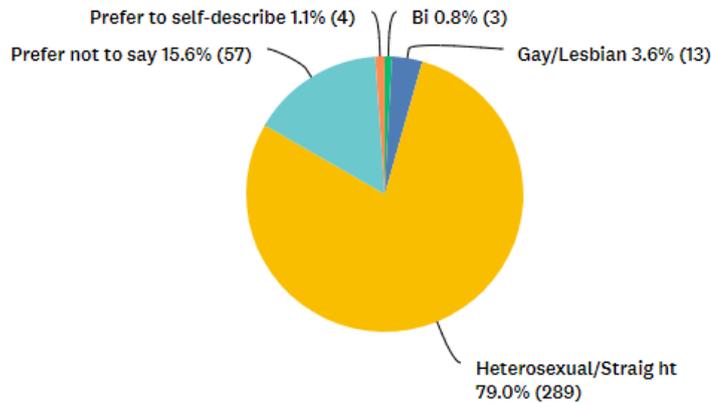
The descriptors used in this consultation differed from previous consultations and was based on best practice advice provided by Stonewall.



Sexual Orientation

Which of the following best describes your Sexual Orientation?

Answered: 366 Skipped: 99



Answer Choices	Response %	Response Number
Bi	0.8%	3
Gay/Lesbian	3.6%	13
Heterosexual/Straight	79.0%	289
Prefer not to say	15.6%	57
Prefer to self-describe	1.1%	4
Total		366

The data shows:

- 79.0% of respondents were heterosexual/straight.
- 3.5% described themselves as gay/lesbian and 0.8% as bi.
- 1.1% preferred to self-describe.
- Of the total respondents 15.6% preferred not to say.

Compared to the last consultation, we have seen a 333% increase in the respondent category of gay/lesbian which is encouraging, with the proportion of respondents in the heterosexual/straight category experiencing a 2% point drop. The remaining categories are broadly the same.

Government data from 2019 suggests that 93.7% of the UK population identify their sexuality as heterosexual,² 1.6% identify as gay/lesbian, 1.1% identify as bisexual, 0.7% as 'other' and 3.0% did not want respond. In comparison, the data we collected from this consultation appears

² Office of National Statistics – Sexual Orientation UK



reflective of the national data set with a higher than average response from those identifying as gay/lesbian.

Summary and Next Steps

RBFRS will continue to review its consultation methods to ensure we communicate with our stakeholders in an effective and meaningful way. We welcome any feedback you may have, so please email consultations@rbfrs.co.uk with any suggestions.

On 28 April 2022, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority will conscientiously considered the outcomes of this report. The chosen option will be implemented in summer 2022.



Appendix A

This is the raw data comparison of EDI data from this consultation against the responses from the 2020 CRMP Strategy Consultation. Categories were improved for this consultation. The differences can be seen in the comparison with any categories with a grey box updated since the last consultation.

Response Capacity

	AFA Consultation	CRMP Strategy consultation
RBFRS staff	28.1%	38.0%
Resident of Royal Berkshire	41.7%	44.1%
Business owner	6.0%	1.1%
On behalf of an organisation or group	12.0%	8.4%
Work in Berkshire	8.7%	3.4%
Other	3.5%	4.9%

Age

	AFA Consultation		CRMP Strategy consultation
Under 16	0%		
16-24	4.4%	25 and under	4.9%
25-34	18.1%	26-35	18.4%
35-44	26.0%	36-45	27.4%
45-54	28.7%	46-55	25.2%
55-64	15.6%	56-65	15.0%
65+	7.1%	65 and over	9.0%

Sexuality

	AFA Consultation	CRMP Strategy consultation
Bi	0.8%	1.1%
Gay/Lesbian	3.5%	
Gay man		0.0%
Lesbian/gay woman		1.1%
Heterosexual/straight	79.0%	81.1%
Prefer not to say	15.6%	16.1%
Prefer to self-describe	1.1%	0.4%
Skipped	99	42



Religion

	AFA Consultation	CRMP Strategy consultation
Christian	35.8%	39.2%
Buddhist	0.3%	1.1%
Hindu	0.8%	0.4%
Jewish	0.0%	0.0%
Muslim	2.2%	0.0%
Sikh	1.1%	1.5%
No religion or belief	42.6%	39.5%
Prefer not to say	15.3%	17.5%
Prefer to self-describe	1.9%	0.8%
Skipped	99	39

Gender

	AFA Consultation	CRMP Strategy consultation
Agender	0.0%	0.0%
Female	34.8%	41.8%
Gender fluid		0.0%
Male	54.5%	49.4%
Non-binary	0.8%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	8.8%	8.0%
Prefer to self-describe	1.1%	0.4%
Skipped	100	39

Ethnicity

	AFA Consultation	CRMP Strategy consultation
White British	76.6%	
White Irish	1.6%	0.0%
Other white	4.7%	2.3%
White British/English/ Welsh/Scottish/NI		79.3%
Gypsy/Irish traveller		0.0%
Black or Black British African		0.0%
Black or Black British Caribbean		0.8%
Black or Black British other		0.0%
Black African	0.0%	
Black Caribbean	0.5%	
Other black	0.5%	
Bangladeshi	0.3%	



Chinese	0.3%	
Indian	1.6%	
Pakistani	1.4%	
Other Asian	1.1%	
Asian or Asian British Indian		1.5%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani		0.0%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi		0.0%
Asian or Asian British Chinese		0.4%
Asian or Asian British other		0.4%
White and Asian	1.0%	0.4%
White and black African	0.3%	0.0%
White and black Caribbean	0.3%	1.1%
Other mixed	0.5%	0.4%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to say	8.5%	13.0%
Prefer to self-describe	0.5%	0.4%

Disability

	AFA Consultation	CRMP Strategy consultation
No	85.5%	86.5%
Yes	7.9%	6.8%
Prefer not to say	6.6%	6.8%
Skipped	99	40

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS CONSULTATION



Agenda Item 13

Appendix B

This document is available in the following formats on the RBFRS website:

- Easy Read
- Large Text
- Plain Text
- Polish
- Punjabi (Indian)
- Urdu



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» FOREWORD

We are committed to ensuring we provide excellent services to the people of Royal Berkshire. Therefore, we are asking you if we should change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms (AFAs) in lower-risk, occupied buildings.

Our data tells us that over 99% of the automatic fire alarm notifications received end up being false alarms. False alarms can be caused by a number of issues, for example, aerosol sprays, cooking fumes or a fire alarm system that hasn't been serviced properly. Therefore, we are asking you to consider [two options](#), one which reflects a change to our current policy and one in which our current policy remains the same. No decisions have been made and your feedback will be vital to the decision-making process. Please take the time to conscientiously consider the proposed options and the implications of adopting them as set out in this document.

Your comments will help inform the decision which will be made by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on which proposal to adopt. The consultation will run for 10 weeks from 17 January until 28 March 2022.



Councillor Colin Dudley

Chairman

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority



Wayne Bowcock

Chief Fire Officer and Chief
Executive

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue
Service



» HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Automatic Fire Alarm consultation will run from 17 January 2022 until 28 March 2022.

Over the next few pages, we will be outlining the proposed changes to the way in which we respond to AFAs in lower-risk, occupied premises.

No decisions have been made. We want to hear your views on our consultation proposals, which will assist in the decision-making that follows.

We are committed to providing all members of our local communities with the opportunity to provide us with their feedback. This document is also available in EasyRead, large text and plain text form, as well as in a variety of languages. Should you require help with accessing the information in a different format, please contact us using any of the methods below.

You can get in touch by:



Responding to the consultation on our website: www.rbfrs.co.uk/consultations



**Writing to us at: Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service,
Consultation, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading,
Berkshire, RG31 7SD**



Emailing us at consultations@rbfrs.co.uk



Phoning: 0118 938 4331



**Following us on social media on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram,
YouTube and LinkedIn**



» ABOUT US

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is responsible for an area of around 486 square miles, from Slough and Langley in the east to Lambourn and Newbury in the west. It employs more than 600 members of staff, who serve a population of approximately 917,000 people.

The Service's highly-trained fire crews deal with incidents ranging from road and rail accidents to fuel and chemical spills, aviation and waterway accidents, collapsed buildings, large animal rescues and, of course, fires.

Along with providing a swift and effective response to incidents, one of the Service's aims is to educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies. It works with schools, businesses, residents and community groups throughout Royal Berkshire to raise awareness and educate people about a wide variety of safety issues.

The Service joined forces with Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service in 2015 to establish a shared emergency call handling centre - Thames Valley Fire Control Service.



24 hours a day



7 days a week



365 days a year

486

square miles of land are covered in Royal Berkshire



17

fire stations across the County



We are responsible for Slough and Langley in the east, to Lambourn and Newbury in the west

917,000

we serve a culturally diverse population



Over 600

members of staff in total

Over 450

are on a shift pattern



In our [Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\) 2019-23](#), Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set RBFRS six public facing commitments:

- We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
- We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money.
- We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

For 2020-21, RBFRS set an additional four objectives:

- We will recruit, train and develop our people to ensure we create a safe, professional and capable workforce that are supported to become the best public servants they can be for the residents of Berkshire.
- We will manage RBFRS in accordance with best practice, understanding and continuous improvement, learning from events and being transparent in our compliance.
- We will be strong and visible in our leadership in developing a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are recognised.
- We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.





» OUR LEGAL AND STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the Statutory Instrument that requires fire and rescue services to have due regard for the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Framework provides guidance on community risk management planning and states that a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) should:



Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all stages review with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners.



At RBFRS, we have developed a Consultation Strategy, which aims to:

- Outline the legal and statutory context of public consultation.
- Explain clearly RBFRS' procedures and plans for engaging and consulting with the public.
- Create a Strategy which reflects good practice in public consultation.
- Depending on the nature of the proposals we are planning to take forward, we have set out the following principles for consultation:

Public consultations: we will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including the public on any changes, which are high-level issues that have a material impact on the performance of the services we provide, in accordance with our Consultation Strategy.

In carrying out any consultation, RBFRS aims to follow the four Gunning Principles (R v London Borough of Brent [1985] 84 LGR 168), which govern how public bodies should consult. They specify that:

- Consultations should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage.
- Sufficient information is provided for intelligent consideration.
- Adequate time is given for response.
- Responses are conscientiously taken into account before a decisions are taken.

We strongly recommend that you read this document in full, in order to provide informed feedback about our proposed changes to the way we respond to lower-risk, occupied premises automatic fire alarms (AFAs).



» WHAT ARE WE CONSULTING ON?

We would like your feedback on how we respond to **automatic fire alarms (AFAs) in lower-risk, occupied buildings** for example shops, factories or office blocks.

While we may respond to a variety of automatic fire alarms in houses, flats, hotels and student accommodation, amongst others, there is no change proposed to how we respond to AFAs in higher-risk buildings, where we will send a fire engine response. Under both options in this consultation, a fire engine will always be sent when there is a confirmed fire. **The difference between these two options is removing the second call back after 20 minutes.** As part of this consultation, there are two options:

Option A - When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an automatic fire alarm sounding, we will make contact with the building occupier and ask them to confirm the cause of the alarm. After making contact, the Fire Control Operator will ask the occupier to do their necessary checks as part of their fire safety measures and let us know if there is a fire. If a fire is confirmed, we will send a fire engine immediately. If they can't confirm the cause of the alarm, we will not send a fire engine at that time, based on there being no confirmed fire.

Option B - When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an automatic fire alarm sounding, we will make up to two attempts to confirm the cause of the alarm. If at the point of the first telephone call, the building occupier can't confirm the cause of alarm, we will make a second telephone call to the occupier (after 20 minutes). If the cause of the automatic fire alarm is not confirmed at this stage, we send a fire engine to the building.



Lower-risk, occupied buildings

This consultation only applies to these types of buildings. This could be shops or office blocks.



Higher-risk buildings

There will be **no change** to the way we respond to automatic fire alarms in these buildings. This could be homes, hotels and student accommodation.



We are consulting on a proposal to remove the second call back (after 20 minutes) as detailed in Option B.



Our data tells us that over 99% of the automatic fire alarm notifications received end up being false alarms.



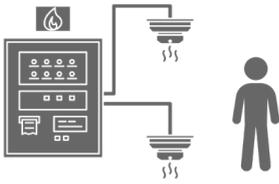
Under both options, if we can't establish contact with the building occupier OR a fire is confirmed, we will always send a fire engine.



» WHAT IS AN AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM?

An automatic fire alarm (AFA) is an alarm that, when it sounds, will automatically alert the occupants of the building, who should manage the response to the alarm. It may also notify a remote Alarm Receiving Centre depending on the local arrangements, who will contact the Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the person responsible for the building.

Different premises have their own procedure for responding to AFAs:



In some buildings, if there is a person onsite, they may investigate the source of the alarm before deciding whether they need to call 999 for the Fire and Rescue Service. This may be because the AFA is not linked to an Alarm Receiving Centre.



In other cases, the Alarm Receiving Centre may ask the building occupier to investigate the cause of the alarm before deciding whether to make contact with the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room on a designated emergency phone line. Often, however, the Fire and Rescue Service is contacted by the Alarm Receiving Centre without the check being made with the building occupier.



Where a building is unoccupied, the Alarm Receiving Centre will notify the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room that there is a fire alarm activating.

An automatic fire alarm will detect a possible fire through changes in the building, which could include smoke and heat, and then notify the occupants to evacuate should there be a fire or other emergency.

Building Occupiers' Responsibilities

Building occupiers and managers have [legal responsibilities regarding fire safety](#).

Building occupiers should consider how to reduce the number of automatic fire alarms and respond in a prompt manner when an automatic fire alarm goes off. This would be supported by an up-to-date fire risk assessment and evacuation plan, as well as training for staff designated as fire wardens.



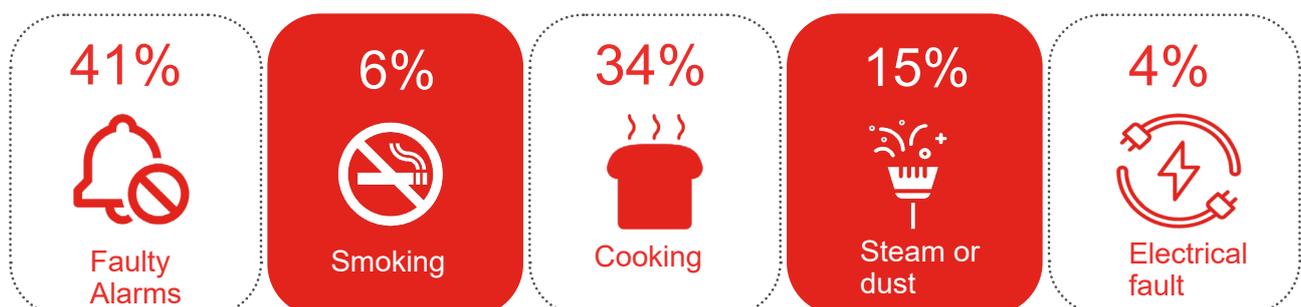
» WHAT CAUSES FALSE ALARMS?

There are many causes of false alarms in the workplace. Here are the more common causes of false fire alarms:

- **Lack of effective management** - in taking responsibility for the fire alarm system, being proactive and reactive to causes of false alarms and managing an initial investigation into the cause of an alarm before the fire and rescue service are called is essential. Ineffective management is a key cause of a fire engine responding to automatic fire alarm calls that are false alarms.
- **Cooking fumes** - being recognised by a detector in a nearby area. e.g. a smoke detector located in a corridor outside a kitchen.
- **Steam and aerosol sprays** - activating smoke detectors.
- **Incorrect type of detector** - a typical example is where a room that is protected with a smoke detector has its use changed and a toaster or kettle is introduced.
- **Work completed onsite** - causing dust or electrical disturbances.
- **Failure to notify the alarm receiving centre** - when the system is being tested.
- **Unsatisfactory maintenance** - where detectors are rarely cleaned and serviced.
- **Incorrect placement of a detector** - in an area where there is excessive air movement due to mechanical heating, ventilation or open windows.

Our data tells us that of the 15,000 automatic fire alarm notifications assessed over a five-year period, 99% are false alarms. Of these, around 1,500 had the specific reason for false alarm recorded. This showed that:

- 41% of false alarms were caused by deliberate or faulty alarms that were not properly maintained.
- 34% of false alarms were caused by cooking (e.g. burnt toast or cooking fumes).
- 15% of false alarms were caused by steam or dust.
- 6% of false alarms were caused by smoking.
- 4% of false alarms were caused by a small electrical fault, such as electrical devices.





» HOW WE CURRENTLY RESPOND TO AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS

Our current policy on whether we send a fire engine to a report of a fire from an AFA activating is:



We will attend all reports of automatic fire detection in high-risk, occupied buildings (including buildings, such as care homes, hotels and other properties that are presumed to be occupied).



We will attend all reports of automatic fire detection in dwellings (a house, a high-rise block, or other place of residence).



We will attend all reports of automatic fire detection in unoccupied buildings (including buildings that are presumed to be unoccupied).



We will call-challenge all reports of automatic fire detection in lower-risk, buildings that are, or are reasonably assumed to be, occupied and only attend if contact has not been made or the cause of the alarm is not confirmed by the building occupier. Currently, if the cause is not confirmed at the point of the first call, we will call back after 20 minutes.

When a call comes in to the Fire and Rescue Service stating there is a report of an alarm sounding from an AFA, our Fire and Rescue Service Control Room already has procedures in place that can ‘filter’ some of the calls by asking the premises, under their fire risk assessment to confirm if there is a fire or not. Often, they will have onsite fire wardens who will manage the fire safety of the building, which will include the buildings response to automatic fire alarms. When these calls are challenged, if the cause of the alarm is confirmed to be a fire, we will send a fire engine immediately. If the cause is confirmed not to be a fire, a fire engine is not be sent because there is no requirement for it at that time.

We would like to consider a new way to respond to AFAs. This is because we think that there is an opportunity to reduce the number of false alarm calls we attend with a fire engine. By reducing the number of times a fire engine responds to automatic fire alarm calls, we would be able to make sure fire engines and crews are more available for other emergencies across the County where lives are at risk, as well as freeing up more resources for critical fire and rescue activities, such as delivering fire safety advice to our communities and firefighter training.



We will respond to a variety of automatic fire alarms, as shown below. We will still always maintain a response to automatic fire alarms where one or more of the following applies:



There is a known fire in the premises.



The building is known or presumed to be unoccupied.



The premises is a residential property.



The premises has a sleeping risk, including all domestic buildings, halls of residence and hotels.



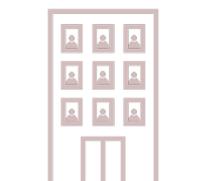
The premises is a high-rise building with the top floor over 18 metres above access level.



The premises is a known or presumed high-risk due to the characteristics of the occupants or the processes within the building.



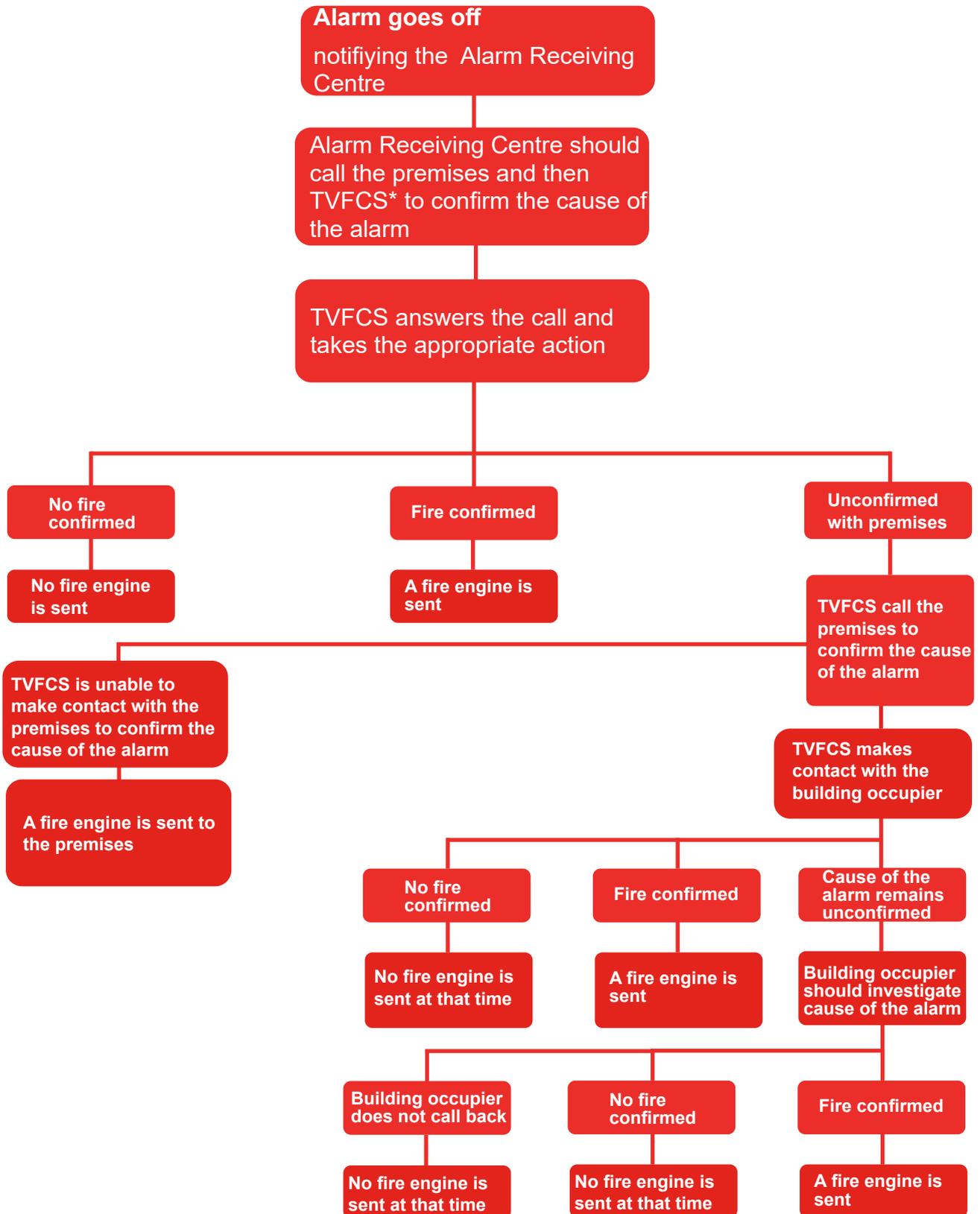
Where the mobilising officer has reasonable doubt or cause for concern and chooses to use their discretion.



This consultation only focuses on the way we respond to automatic fire alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings (for example office blocks, shops or factories).



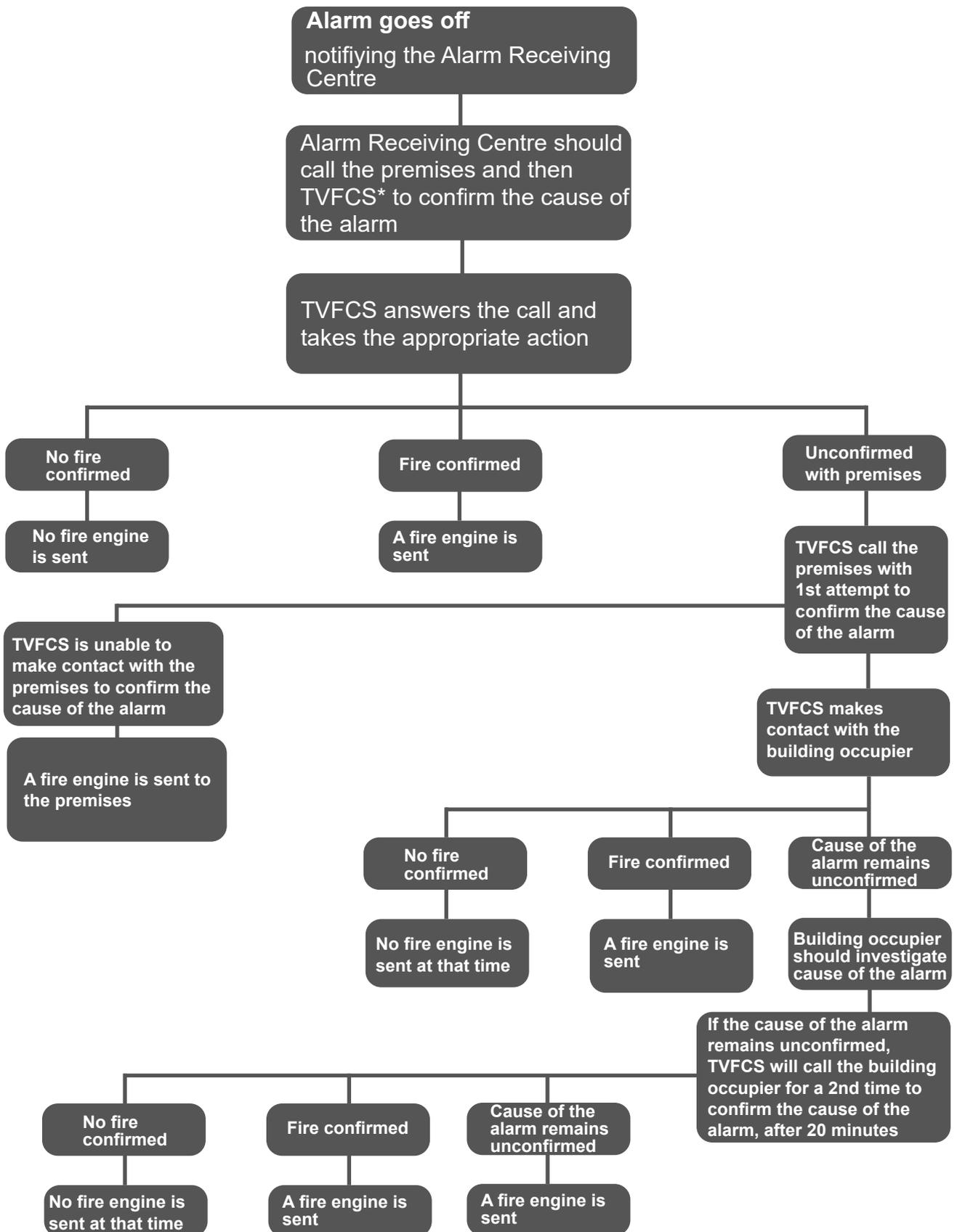
» OUR PROPOSED PROCESS - OPTION A



* TVFCS - Thames Valley Fire Control Service, who operate our joint Control Room.



» OUR CURRENT PROCESS - OPTION B



* TVFCS - Thames Valley Fire Control Service, who operate our joint Control Room.



» THE IMPACT OF AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS

To provide informed feedback about our proposed changes to the way we respond to automatic fire alarms, we analysed five years of data, which established:

- There were over 2,900 automatic fire alarm calls on average per year.
- Of those, over 99% of the automatic fire alarm calls to Royal Berkshire end up being false alarms.
- Of the 2,900 notifications, we attend about 2,200 automatic fire alarm calls in all building types on average per year.
- Of those 2,200 we attended, 99% ended up being false alarms.
- Based on previous data and the analysis undertaken, if we were to change the way we respond to AFAs, then 650 of these notifications, which come from lower-risk, occupied buildings may not require the attendance of a fire engine. This could lead to this time being used for other priority work, such as prevention work in the community, risk-critical training activities, other operational preparedness activities such as familiarisation visits and more fire engines would be available for other emergency incidents.
- We spend an average of around 30 minutes dealing with each of these notifications (approximately 650 of which may not require an attendance under consultation Option A) and at least four firefighters will take the time to respond, so by reducing our call outs to false AFAs, this could lead to a saving of up to 1,300 hours of firefighter time each year, which could be spent on prevention and protection activities.
- With 650 of these notifications per year, over the past five years we responded to 3,250 automatic fire alarms that may not have required an attendance under Option A. Out of these 3,250 responses, there were 17 incidents in total that were confirmed fires.
- Of these 17 incidents, three required firefighting action and the remaining 14 fires were out on arrival. Of these three fires, there were no casualties and they were put out using a fire extinguisher. If [Option A](#) were to be approved, incidents similar to these would continue to be call-challenged under [Option A](#). We will still always maintain our emergency response to 999 calls and confirmed fires.

Methodology Statement

Five years of data was analysed to give the yearly averages, in line with our standard reporting process for AFAs. The 650 AFA calls per year likely to require confirmation before attending was calculated by assessing the alarm type and the time of the call, and using this information to classify the data as "Occupied" or "Unoccupied." This value was used to calculate the potential maximum savings alongside the following; the average time spent attending an AFA call calculated at around 30 minutes from the five years data; the average number of appliances in attendance of an AFA is one which will have four firefighters aboard. To assess the potential impact if Option A if the consultation was agreed, the data was classified as "Occupied" or "Unoccupied" for AFA incidents that ended up being confirmed fires. This returned 17 incidents, which were then assessed manually to identify whether any firefighting activities were carried out, of which, three incidents were identified. This is the total for the five-year period. A full version of the methodology can be made available upon request.



» THE BENEFIT OF ATTENDING FEWER AFA CALLS

If we were to change the way we respond to AFAs, then we would end up with more time to deliver other key priority work, such as:

- Delivering valuable fire safety advice in the community;
- Carrying out vital training;
- Visiting high-risk properties to help prepare firefighters should they need to respond to an incident there; and
- More fire engines would be available for the other emergency incidents.

99%

of automatic fire alarm calls to RBFRS end up being false alarms.



automatic fire alarm calls are received on average per year.

650

fewer notifications with a fire engine response could be attended each year under the consultation ([Option A](#)).

automatic fire alarm notifications are attended on average by a fire engine each year.



1,300

hours of firefighter time each year could be saved.

If the consultation option were to be agreed, the saved time could be used for other priority work:

- Prevention work
- Risk-critical training activities
- More fire engines would be available for emergencies



We will still always maintain our emergency response to 999 calls



» OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

We would like you to look at the two options below and to choose which one you prefer, so that we can better understand your thoughts and views. This will support the Fire Authority to make a decision about **how we respond to AFAs in lower-risk, occupied buildings**.

The below consultation option offers a minimal change to the way we deliver our Control handling service for automatic fire alarms in lower-risk, occupied premises only when the premises is unable to confirm the cause of the alarm. **The difference between these two options is removing the second call back after 20 minutes**. The options are:

Option A

When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an automatic fire alarm sounding, we will ask the premises to confirm the cause of the alarm. As part of Option A in this consultation:

- The second call back after 20 minutes is removed because the occupier will do their necessary fire safety checks and let us know if there is a fire.
- If it is confirmed that there is no fire, we won't send a fire engine.
- If there is a fire, we will send a fire engine.
- If we can't make contact with the building, we will send a fire engine.

Option B

When the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room receives a notification of an automatic fire alarm sounding, we will continue to apply our current policy and will not change the way we respond to AFAs. As part of Option B in this consultation:

- If it is confirmed that there is no fire, we won't send a fire engine.
- If there is a fire, we will send a fire engine.
- If we can't make contact with the building, we will send a fire engine.
- OR if the alarm goes off and the occupier is unable to confirm the cause on the first call, we will ask them to check if there is a fire as part of their necessary fire safety checks. If a fire is still not confirmed, we will call again for a second time, after 20 minutes, and if it's still not confirmed, we will send a fire engine.



» QUESTIONS

The below shares our core question set for the proposed consultation. To make an informed decision on the below options, please ensure you have read the consultation document thoroughly.

1. Please choose your preferred option

Option A

Change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings as outlined in the consultation document.

OR

Option B

Keep the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms in lower-risk, occupied buildings the same as outlined in the consultation document.

2. Why have you chosen the option you selected?

3. Do you have any other suggestions or comments about this consultation?

» RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION



[Complete the survey](#)



Phone: 0118 938 4331



Email: consultations@rbfrs.co.uk



» NEXT STEPS

The flow chart below illustrates the Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation timeline we are working towards. This includes:

- **Consultation period** – The 10-week consultation and engagement with residents, staff and key stakeholders begins. The consultation will run from 17 January 2022 until 28 March 2022.
- **Consultation closure** - Consultation closes and work begins on analysing and compiling the responses into a summary report for decision makers.
- **Conscientiously consider the results** - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority meeting to conscientiously consider the results of consultation and make decisions on the options.
- **Implement decision** - Implementation of chosen options commences.



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Appendix B

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23
LEAD OFFICER	NIKKI RICHARDS, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND BECCA CHAPMAN, DATA PERFORMANCE AND RISK MANAGER
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Annual Plan will provide direction for the organisation for the next year within the context of the Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2019-23. It will define the scope of the organisations activities in terms of what it will and will not do. It will match the activities of the organisation to the environment in which it operates so that it maximises opportunities and minimises threats, and will synchronise the organisations activities to its resource capacity.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **APPROVE** the Annual Plan 2022/23 for publication.

3. REPORT

3.1 The annual corporate planning process will align a number of interrelated planning processes to support service delivery. This Plan reflects the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments, by highlighting the areas of focus for a single year and stating the measures of success and setting associated targets to achieve them. It will be available on the intranet to provide a single access point for all managers to timely, accurate information to assist with planning and decision-making. In addition, it will be published on the RBFRS website for the public.

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- 3.2 The Plan has links to a number of other planning tools and processes which will bring the focus of managers to a single location and will create a more joined up approach to planning.
- 3.3 The planned component parts of the Annual Plan to consider:
- Annual Objectives 2022/23
 - Delivery of the Annual Objectives
 - Corporate Measures
 - Priority Programmes
 - Risk Management
 - Assurance
 - HMICFRS
- 3.4 The draft Annual Plan is usually considered by the Audit and Governance Committee prior to being recommended to the Fire Authority for approval. However the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed production of the draft Plan. To expedite approval and publication, the Plan is now presented directly to the Fire Authority.
- 3.5 The Annual Plan has been drafted to refer to the 'Community Risk Management Plan' (CRMP), which is now used nationally in the sector to refer to what was previously known as the 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' (IRMP).
- 3.6 The Annual Plan proposes some changes to our Corporate Measures this year. These changes are the result of our maturing understanding of risk in our communities, evaluation of our current practice, and alignment to indicators used by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The changes are:
- 3.6.1 Fire Fatalities and Casualties**
- 3.6.1.1 Previous Measures: **Number of Fire Deaths in accidental dwelling fires, and Number of non-fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires.**
- 3.6.1.2 Proposed Measures: **Number of fire deaths and Number of non-fatal fire casualties.**
- 3.6.1.3 The new measure includes all fire fatalities and casualties and allows us to track outcomes related to a wider range of our activities across all our Service Delivery work. We will retain a focus on accidental dwelling fires through our Service Plan measures.
- 3.6.2 Safe and Well Visits**
- 3.6.2.1 Previous Measures: **Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to those with individual characteristic making them at higher risk of death in the event of an accidental dwelling fire and Number of Safe and Well Visits delivered to those who live in households with demographic characteristics associated with higher risk of injury in accidental dwelling fires.**

3.6.2.2 Proposed Measures: **Increase in the number of Referrals for Safe and Well Visits received from our partners and Percentage of Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time** (two measures with separate targets for very high and high, and medium risk)

3.6.2.3 We propose a move away from a volume target to measures which will enable us to focus on the highest risk in our communities. We now receive very good quality referrals from our partners, identifying people at high risk from having a fire in their home and dying or being injured as a result. We propose to increase the number of referrals we receive from agencies and focus on ensuring we visit these individuals quickly.

3.6.3 Fire Safety Audits

3.6.3.1 Previous Measure: **Total Number of Fire Safety Audits carried out in premises in Berkshire.**

3.6.3.2 Propose Measure: **Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified in our Risk Based Inspection Programme.**

3.6.3.3 As set out in our Protection Strategy, we have reviewed and evaluated our existing Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). As a result, a new Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) has been developed and tested and full roll-out is now in progress. We propose a measure that will enable us to track how many of our Fire Safety Audits are to premises on the RBIP, with the intention to move to a target percentage next year.

3.6.4 Wholetime Appliance Availability

3.6.4.1 Previous Measure: **Percentage of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all wholetime pumping appliances.**

3.6.4.2 Proposed Measure: **Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability** (measured using total time unavailable across the period in question)

3.6.4.3 The proposed measure will tell us what percentage of time our wholetime pumping appliances are unavailable for mobilisation whether this is due to crewing, maintenance of the appliance or for other reasons.

3.6.5 Resilience Measures

3.6.5.1 This is a new section of measures, added to help us manage our performance in the area of resilience and preparedness, reflecting the sector focus on preparedness.

3.6.5.2 Proposed Measures: **Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale and Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed.**

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

4.1 The Annual Plan supports the delivery of the six Strategic Commitments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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5.1 There are no issues with compliance with standing orders or financial regulation.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct impacts from this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct impacts from this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 There are no direct collaboration issues arising from this report.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Senior Leadership Team, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Finance Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 [Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019-23](#)

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – Annual Plan 2022/23

13. CONTACT DETAILS

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Annual Plan

2022-2023



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Introduction

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) provides Prevention, Protection and Response services across the County of Berkshire. There are 16 fire stations across the county of Berkshire, ranging from Langley and Slough in the East to Lambourn and Hungerford in the West. They serve a diverse population of 914,859, 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

Our highly-trained fire crews respond to incidents ranging from road and rail accidents to fuel and chemical spills, aviation and waterway accidents, collapsed buildings, large animal rescues and, of course, fires.

The role of RBFRS within local communities is evolving. As well as responding to incidents, RBFRS provides a wide range of services including safety and protection advice to our residents and businesses. We work alongside teams in the six unitary authorities of Berkshire, as well as, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), Public Health, and other public service providers in Berkshire. In doing so, RBFRS is helping to reduce community risk and contribute to the overall safety of the communities we serve, whilst still providing a value-for-money service to the local taxpayer.

In 2018, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority published the Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-2023, demonstrating how, over the next four years, RBFRS will deliver its services, in order to achieve the Fire Authority's six Strategic Commitments.

The Annual Objectives for 2022-2023 (which include the six Strategic Commitments), have been updated to include specific areas of focus for the year ahead in support of our vision for 2023 and beyond, and to ensure RBFRS utilises and maximises its available resources to deliver a quality service to the people of Royal Berkshire.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Early in the pandemic, in line with government guidance, RBFRS suspended non-essential activities to protect our communities, staff and critical functions. Since then we have continually risk assessed our activities, reintroducing services when case levels and restrictions have allowed.

In developing our Annual Plan for 2022/23, we have reviewed our progress against the objectives we set last year, re-assessed our priorities in the light of developments in the sector and considered the likely ongoing impact of the pandemic. We recognise that we may still face further challenges due to COVID-19 and that we may need to adapt again throughout the year. We remain committed to delivering this Annual Plan for the people of Royal Berkshire.



ANNUAL OBJECTIVES 2021 - 2022

In order to achieve the Strategic Commitments we have made to the people of Royal Berkshire, we have set the following 10 Annual Objectives for 2022/23, and highlighted areas of focus in achieving these Objectives. This is further supported by our Corporate Measures (outlined on page 10) which are directly aligned to the Annual Objectives and our core duties and responsibilities.

1. We will provide education and advice on how to prevent and mitigate the impacts of fires and other emergencies.

- a. Continue to deliver against the commitments in our Prevention Strategy, embedding quality assurance.
- b. Continue our programme of evaluation of Prevention activity.
- c. Deliver an effective fire, road and water safety education programme, aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council guidance.
- d. Continue to deliver Safe and Well Visits for the vulnerable in Berkshire in line with our Prevention Strategy.
- e. Deliver and evaluate our risk-based programme of follow-up visits for the most vulnerable cases.

2. We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.

- a. As set out in our Response Strategy, continue the review of our specialist water rescue capabilities to be aligned to local risk and reflect national best practice.
- b. Improve and evaluate our ability to respond to risk in the West of the county through effective targeting of our Protection and Prevention activity.
- c. Continue to focus on the sustained availability of the on-call duty model.
- d. Undertake effective risk analysis to inform capability requirements for specialist incidents



3. We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.

- a. We will implement the learning from the phase one Grenfell inquiry and adapt to planned legislative changes, enabling us to respond quickly to the changing fire safety environment.
- b. We will continue to develop and embed our new Risk-Based Inspection Programme methodology and evaluate its implementation.
- c. We will continue to promote and influence the fitting of sprinklers in both new and existing buildings where appropriate.

4. We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.

- a. Focus our activities in support of Children and Young People through our road and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and FireSafe.
- b. Continue to make high quality, timely safeguarding referrals to other agencies.
- c. We will work with and support our communities and partners in post-pandemic recovery.

5. We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money, and is financially and environmentally sustainable, whilst ensuring Equality of Access for the public.

- a. Deliver the 2022/23 requirements of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework, the Efficiency Plan and the new Sustainability Strategy.
- b. Continue to work in partnership with other Fire and Rescue Services to implement a Value for Money assessment that can be used across the sector.
- c. Continue to address the burden of false alarms on the service.
- d. Develop and consult on a new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to start in 2023.

6. We will continue to work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

- a. Continue to influence and encourage greater flexibility to secure sustainable funding over the medium term to ensure our Service effectively meets local risk.
- b. Proactively engage and respond to relevant consultations and opportunities to shape fire and rescue services in England, including the Fire Reform White Paper.



- 7. We will recruit, train and develop our people to ensure we create a safe, professional, capable and diverse workforce that are supported to become the best public servants they can be for the residents of Berkshire.**
 - a. Consult on and implement an updated People Strategy to cover the period 2022-25.
 - b. Ensure workforce planning leads to the right people, in the right positions, with the skills required, including responding to the requirements resulting from recent pensions cases.
 - c. Continue to implement the Fire Safety Development and Assessment Pathways (DAPs), and commence further DAPs for professional services staff.
 - d. Deliver the 2022/23 requirements of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan.

- 8. We will manage RBFRS in accordance with best practice and national professional standards, understanding and continuous improvement, learning from events and being transparent in our compliance.**
 - a. Ensure a robust internal and external Audit Programme, and actively engage with the Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' Inspection in the Summer of 2022.
 - b. Work in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.
 - c. Proactively engage with and respond to relevant and emerging legislation and regulation, and monitor this through the Corporate Risk Register.
 - d. Continue to engage with the development of professional Fire Standards for fire and rescue services in England and ensure approved Standards are implemented.

- 9. We will be strong and visible in our leadership in developing a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture, reflecting our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives, where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are recognised.**
 - a. Deliver the 2022/23 requirements of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Objectives and Action Plan.
 - b. Ensure adherence to the Behavioural Competency Framework (BCF) across RBFRS, launch 360 feedback tool based on the BCF.
 - c. Launch the Chairman's Internship, a paid internship aimed at 16-18 year old residents of Berkshire from ethnic background that are currently under-represented in the Service.



10. We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.

- a. Continue to explore and pursue opportunities to collaborate in the use of our property and estates and in the procurement of goods and services.
- b. Further our operational alignment with Thames Valley partners through the introduction of common policy, guidance, equipment and training.
- c. Continue to support the Thames Valley alignment to the ISO Fire Investigation requirement.
- d. Explore opportunities and champion the work of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company Limited to reduce the frequency and cost of risk related incidents.



Delivery of the Annual Objectives

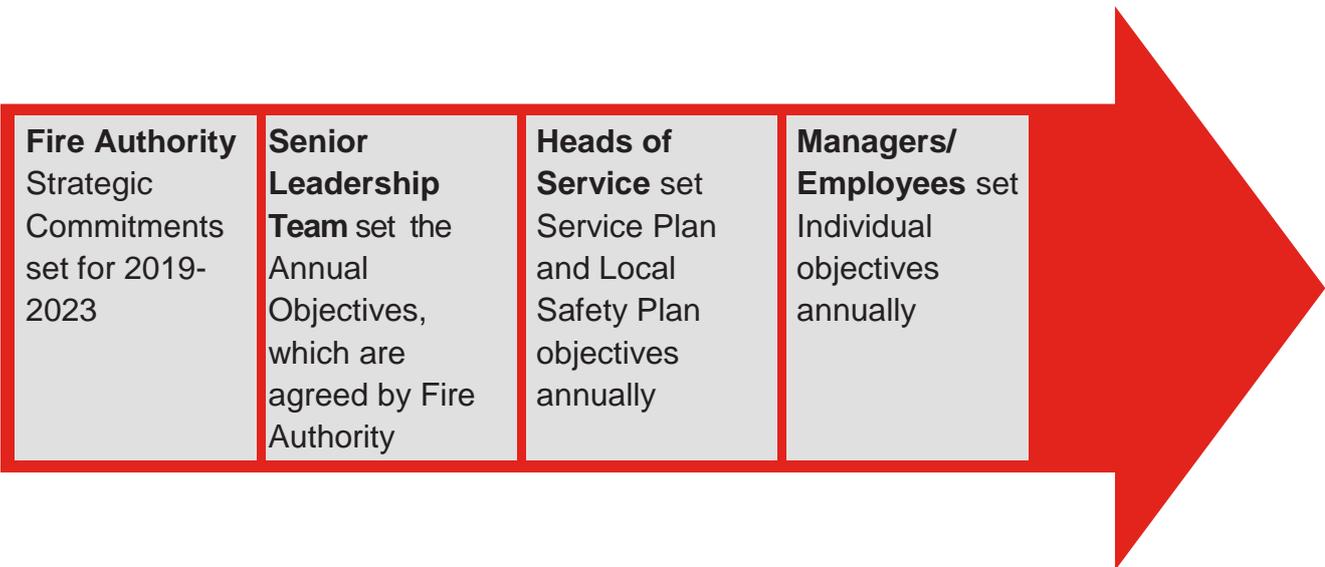
Our Annual Objectives will be delivered through Service Plans. Projects will also be overseen by the Programme Board.

Service Plans

Heads of Service produce an annual Service Plan to assist in the management of day-to-day business. Service Plans include both business as usual and project activity and help to predict the resource levels, both for individual activities, and for the service as a whole. The delivery of Service Plans is further supported by individual employee objectives which are agreed with every member of staff and set out how each member of staff will help towards achieving the organisational goals.

Local Safety Plans

We serve our communities through three Service Delivery Hubs, aligned to Unitary Authorities to strengthen local partnership working. The Hubs include integrated Prevention, Protection and Response teams. This model allows our staff to develop their understanding of risk at a local level and ensure resources are targeted accordingly. Each Unitary Authority area has a dedicated annual Local Safety Plan, which sets out localised risk and how resources will be targeted to meet that risk.





Programme Board

Our priority projects are overseen by the Programme Board. The primary focus of the Programme Board in 2022/23 will be to oversee the delivery of projects of strategic importance including, but not limited to, the [CRMP](#) and [People Strategy](#).

Performance Management

Ongoing analysis of performance data supports decision making across the organisation. Management teams review and monitor data and information regularly. The Strategic Performance Board monitors performance in all four quadrants (as set out below) on a quarterly basis. A quarterly Strategic Performance Report is then reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Reporting is structured into four quadrants





CORPORATE MEASURES

Service Provision

Service Provision monitors the service we provide to the public. Performance is monitored in relation to attendance at incidents, types of incidents, Prevention activities and fire safety in commercial buildings.

	Measure	2020/21 Target	2021/22 Target
1	Number of fire deaths	new	0
2	Number of non-fatal fire casualties	new	75 max
3	Number of deliberate primary fires	Reduce	Reduce
4	Number of deliberate secondary fires	Reduce	Reduce
Prevention			
5	Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well visits received from our partners	new	10%
6	Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours.	100%	100%
7	Percentage of Very High and High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	new	90%
8	Percentage of Medium Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	new	75%
Protection			
9	Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme	new	monitor



10	Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result.	60% max	60% max
11	Percentage success when cases go to court.	80%	80%
12	Percentage of statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes.	95%	95%
13	The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received.	Monitor	Improve
14	Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend	Improve	30% (min)
Response			
15	Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered	75%	75%
16	Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability	new	99%
17	Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	60%	60%
Resilience			
18	Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale	new	monitor
19	Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed	new	12
Customer Experience			
20	Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	100%	100%
21	Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall Service	95%	95%



22	Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits	90%	90%
23	% of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit	100%	100%
24	Number of complaints received	Monitor	Monitor
25	Number of compliments received	Monitor	Monitor



Corporate Health

The Corporate Health quadrant monitors the wellbeing of the organisation. Performance is monitored in relation to staffing levels, health and safety and finances within RBFRS, to ensure the organisation is being run safely, efficiently and is cost effective.

	Measure	2020-21 Target	2021-22 Target
Human Resources and Learning & Development			
26	Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups	4%	4%
27	Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews	100%	100%
28	Number of formal grievances	Monitor	Monitor
Health and Safety			
29	Number of RIDDOR accidents and diseases	Max 6	Max 4
Finance and Procurement			
30	Percentage of spend subject to competition	85%	85%
31	Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend	100%	100%
Freedom of Information			
32	Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Protection Legislation)	0	0

Definitions of measures are available in Appendix A.



Priority Programmes – Key Deliverables

Community Risk Management Planning

RBFA is required to publish a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), previously referred to as an 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' or IRMP. In 2018, we consulted on and published an [IRMP for 2019-23](#), which reflects the priorities and requirements of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#).

In 2022/23, our key CRMP deliverables will include:

Project 1: Risk Analyses

- » Review our Risk Methodology and data requirements to inform our new CRMP, ensuring our risk analysis supports equality of access to our services for all the communities of Royal Berkshire.
- » Deliver our action plan to align our analysis to the Fire Standard for Community Risk Management Plans.
- » Develop and consult on a new Community Risk Management Plan to start in 2023.
- » Provide a mapping capability to support local risk analysis.
- » Analyse information about fire casualties to determine risk factors.
- » Continue to engage with and drive the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) work to develop national best practice in risk analysis.

Project 2: Prevention

- » Continue to work in collaboration with our Berkshire partners to identify the most vulnerable people in our society, increasing the numbers of Safe and Well Visits resulting from Referrals.
- » Deliver and evaluate our new programme of follow up Safe and Well Visits to the most vulnerable.



- » Focus our activities in support of Children and Young People through our road and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and FireSafe.
- » Carry out targeted road safety activity, including for motorcyclists and around smart motorways.
- » Further develop local safety initiatives, campaigns and events to target risk at a local level and evaluate their effectiveness.
- » Ensure a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Prevention activities.
- » Carry out a risk based review of Safe and Well Visit provision to be aligned with the development of our new CRMP.

Project 3: Protection

- » Continue to develop and embed our new risk-based inspection programme to ensure that we are identifying and targeting our resources at the areas of highest risk, in line with our Protection Strategy.
- » We will implement the learning from the phase one Grenfell Tower inquiry.
- » Ensure a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Protection activities.

Project 4: Response Resource Deployment

- » Continue to evaluate future developments in housing and infrastructure to ensure that our resource deployments match predicted future demands.
- » As set out in our Response Strategy, continue the review of our specialist water rescue capabilities to be aligned to local risk and reflect national best practice.
- » Improve and evaluate our ability to respond to risk in the West of the county through effective targeting of our Prevention and Protection activity.
- » Undertake incident support and technical capability reviews as part of the risk analysis element of the development of the new CRMP.



Project 5: Response Safe Systems of Work Development

- » Work with the NFCC and other key stakeholders to adopt new technologies, which support effective and efficient safe systems of work.
- » Continue to clarify and prioritise next steps in the digital transformation journey as part of our Technology roadmap.
- » Continue our investment of resource and expertise in the Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus Replacement project, conducting an effective and efficient joint procurement prior to implementation.



People Strategy

The purpose of our [People Strategy](#) is to support RBFRS staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver efficient and effective service on behalf of the Fire Authority, to manage all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the people of Berkshire. Our People Strategy is currently in the process of being updated and will cover the period 2022-2025. Our expectation is that the 2022-2025 People Strategy will be finalised by the end of Quarter 1 2022/23.



Risk

Corporate Risk Register

Achievement of the objectives set is influenced by a number of internal and external factors, which in turn create a level of uncertainty and risk. RBFRS has developed a comprehensive Organisational Risk Management Policy, along with a framework for monitoring and managing risks and uncertainties to ensure that organisational objectives can be achieved.

Each risk, including one-off project risks, is scored on a Matrix (1-25) and recorded on the Risk Register. All strategic risks, and any project or service plan risks with a current score of 17 or above, are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register, monitored monthly by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. One or more treatments will be identified to minimise the likelihood or impact of the risk and the risk will be reviewed regularly to monitor progress.

The Organisational Risk Management Policy does not address health and safety risk or community risk. These are addressed separately through both occupational health and safety management and the CRMP Programme. Further detail and information on the CRMP process can be found in the [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-2023](#). A summary of the Corporate Risk Register is available in the quarterly Strategic Performance Report and updated on a quarterly basis at rbfrs.co.uk.



Assurance

Audit Plan

Audits are an important part of providing the Fire Authority and the public with the assurance that the Service is run properly and in ways that have been agreed by our Officers and Members. They demonstrate that the business is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation, government expectations, good practice and organisational policy. The audits contribute towards the annual Statement of Assurance.

Our Internal Annual Audit Plan is developed in collaboration with our auditors, RSM, and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at the start of the year. Each audit is linked to a risk on our Corporate Risk Register. The audits agreed for 2022/23 are:

- » West Yorkshire Pension Fund
- » Payroll Provider - Dataplan
- » Risk Management and Governance
- » Key Financial Controls
- » Cyber Security
- » Health & Safety and Mandatory Training
- » Facilities Management
- » Grenfell Action plans

Statement of Assurance

The RBFRS annual [Statement of Assurance](#) is available on the RBFRS website. The Statement is produced on an annual basis to formally confirm to Government, stakeholders and the communities we serve that there are adequate arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance and operational matters in RBFRS. The Statement confirms the extent to which the requirements of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) have been met. This includes information about our assurance arrangements regarding Prevention, Protection and Response and how we ensure local and national resilience.



Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

In 2018/19, we were inspected for the first time by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Through the inspection process, we were able to gain external, independent, assurance in relation to the effectiveness and efficiency of our operational response. The results were published in June 2019, and it should be noted that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was judged as 'good' across the three main pillars of 'Effectiveness', 'Efficiency' and 'People'. The report for RBFRS can be found [here](#). The next round of inspections are underway with RBFRS being inspected in Summer 2022. For more information on the inspection of Fire and Rescue Services, please visit the HMICFRS [website](#).



Appendix A: Measure Definitions

Service Delivery

	Measure	Definition
1	Number of fire deaths	The number of deaths that occur as the result of a fire, even when the death occurs weeks or months later.
2	Number of non-fatal fire casualties	The number of non-fatal casualties that occur as a result of a fire. This includes any injuries or medical attention which are attributed to the fire.
3	Number of deliberate primary fires	The total number of primary fires that have been started deliberately.
4	Number of deliberate secondary fires	The total number of secondary fires that have been started deliberately.
Prevention		
5	Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well visits received from our partners	RBFRS receive referrals from other agencies for individuals at risk from fire in their homes. These referrals are a high quality source of information about those at risk in our communities.
6	Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours.	When RBFRS are made aware of the threat or an incidence of arson against an individual(s) a Safe and Well Visit should be conducted, wherever possible, within 48 hours.
7	Percentage of Very High and High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	Safe and Well Referrals are risk assessed, with each category of risk having a target time for completion. Very High risk referrals have a target time of 72 hours and High risk referrals have a target time of 14 days.



8	Percentage of Medium Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	Safe and Well Referrals are risk assessed, with each category of risk having a target time for completion. Medium risk referrals have a target time of 21 days.
Protection		
9	Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme	A Fire Safety Audit is carried out to enforce the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2005. Our Risk Based Inspection Programme targets the riskiest premises in the county for inspection. Fire Safety Audits can also result from complaints, or can be carried out after an incident or for training purposes. This measure allows us to monitor how our resources are being targeted at risk.
10	Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result.	The percentage of completed Fire Safety Audits carried out in commercial premises, where the result was 'Broadly Compliant' (satisfactory) and no further action or follow-up was required.
11	Percentage success when cases go to court.	RBFRS prosecute serious cases following Fire Safety Audits. A successful outcome at court is a finding or admission of guilt.
12	Percentage of statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes.	Statutory fire consultations have a legally defined timeframe in which they must be completed. Types of consultation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing • Building regulations
13	The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received.	Automatic Fire Alarm calls are calls from Alarm systems and have a higher likelihood of being a false alarm. Reducing the number of these types of calls makes us more efficient.
14	Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend	This is the number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received where we did not attend. In some circumstances we are able to seek



		confirmation before attending, enabling us to be more efficient.
Response		
15	Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered	This is our Response Standard, and looks at the time taken from when the Fire Control Room Operator answers the phone until the time the first fire engine (appliance) arrives at the scene of the emergency incident. We aim to attend 75% of these incidents in under 10 minutes.
16	Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability	This measure shows the percentage of time that our wholetime pumping appliances are available for mobilisation. Reasons for unavailability include mechanical defects and crewing.
17	Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	This is the percentage of hours where there are sufficient minimum qualified firefighters on on-call pumping appliances (fire engines) to enable the appliance to be available. On-call fighters are ready to leave their place of work or home and attend emergencies from the local retained station, when they receive the call.
Resilience		
18	Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale	Operational Risk sites are those locations with particular characteristics (e.g. use, location) that pose a specific or unusual risk to our firefighters and the surrounding communities. Regular familiarisation visits by crews and support staff are required to ensure understanding of the risk is up to date.
19	Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed	Service Delivery Hub-level operational exercises are an important part of ensuring RBFRS is prepared for incidents that might occur through testing our planning



		assumptions, guidance and site specific response plans.
Customer Experience		
20	Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to those who have experienced a dwelling fire asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
21	Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to business owners/ managers who have experienced a fire in their commercial premises asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
22	Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to business owners/ managers who have had a full fire safety audit, asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
23	% of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to a sample of individuals who have received a Safe and Well Visit and asks about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
24	Number of complaints received	The number of complaints made to RBFRS about any aspect of our service or staff.
25	Number of compliments received	The number of compliments received by RBFRS about any aspect of our service or staff.



Corporate Health

ID	Measure	Definition
Human Resources and Learning & Development		
26	Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups	This measure looks at sickness across the whole organisation and the percentage of time lost, based on the number of working hours available to the organisation.
27	Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews	This measure reflects the percentage of eligible employees who have had a Personal Development Review meeting. Eligible staff are those who have completed their initial probation period, before the end of the PDR period and who have not been absent for over 50% of the reporting period. Employees moving within the Organisation to new roles on trial or probation periods will still be eligible for a PDR.
28	Number of formal grievances	The number of formal grievances raised by staff under the Grievance, Bullying and Harrassment Policy.
Health and Safety		
29	Number of RIDDOR accidents and diseases	RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) are more serious injury accidents and diseases.
Finance and Procurement		
30	Percentage of spend subject to competition	This measure looks at all items of expenditure over £10k as RBFA must obtain quotes or tenders for all these purchases. This excludes statutory payments such as local authority charges or HMRC.
31	Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend	This measure calculates the supplier spend that is in a compliant contract as a percentage of the total spend to external bodies and suppliers (as per RBFA contract regulations).
Freedom of Information		



32	Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Protection Legislation)	RBFRS are required to conform to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. The Information Commissioner is responsible for determining compliance and issuing advice or penalties. This measure includes only incidents where there is a finding of a breach (not complaints which are subsequently dismissed).
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ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	ADOPTION OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT
LEAD OFFICER	GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR TINA MCKENZIE-BOYLE
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To review the results of the Draft Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Member Code of Conduct Consultation, and to approve the adoption of the RBFA Code of Conduct, as recommended by Audit and Governance Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the results of the Draft RBFA Member Code of Conduct consultation (Appendix B); and
- 2.2 **AGREE** the adoption of the RBFA Member Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

3. REPORT

- 3.1 In November 2020, Audit and Governance Committee recommended the Fire Authority; note the findings and actions from the audit against the 15 best practice recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). The Committee also recommended a review of the Code of Conduct be held annually commencing 2021/22, and where possible take into account the views of the public, community organisations, and neighbouring and appointing authorities. Minute reference 24.

Agenda Item 15

- 3.2 In January 2022, Audit and Governance Committee agreed that subject to the gifts and hospitality amendment threshold be brought back to £25, instead of £50, a six-week consultation be held to commence on 28 January 2022 on the adoption of the Draft RBFA Member Code of Conduct. The Committee also agreed for the consultation findings be brought back to its next meeting, minute reference 38.
- 3.3 The consultation was circulated via Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (RBFRS') social media platforms and via email to Unitary Authorities, Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service Partners and community groups. The consultation document was available in printed version upon request. There were no requests for a printed version.
- 3.4 Throughout the consultation period (Friday 28 January until Friday 11 March) regular tweets, repeat emails were circulated and a post on Facebook was made in the final consultation deadline week. The online questionnaire asked three questions below:

Question 1. Do you support the behaviours required of councillors, as set out in the Draft RBFA Code of Conduct when they are publicly representing Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on official business and when using social media? Yes / No / please explain

Question 2. Do you think the expected standards of councillor conduct and the actions that could be taken should an allegation be made, are clear? Yes / No / please explain

Question 3. Have you got any other comments you would like to make on the Draft RBFA Model Code of Conduct. Yes / No / please explain

3.5 Key results

- A total of 44 respondents participated in the consultation, however not all 44 respondents completed all of the consultation questions.
- Nine respondents indicated they heard about the consultation via email, five social media and one on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service website. A number of respondents skipped this question.
- 100% of respondents' support the behaviours required of councillors, as set out in the Draft RBFA Code of Conduct when they are publicly representing Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on official business and when using social media. One respondent commented '*All people should treat each other with dignity and respect*'.
- 90.91% think the expected standards of councillor conduct and the actions that could be taken should an allegation be made were clear. Two respondents answered 'No', but did not provide a comment or

suggestion on how this could be improved. One respondent commented '*Good clear expectations from people in public office*'

- 90.91% did not have any other comments they would like to make on the Draft RBFA Model Code of Conduct. One respondent commented the seventh Nolan principle of public life 'Leadership' had not been included in the Appendix. The appendix has been subsequently updated to include all seven Nolan principles of public life.

- 3.6 The total impressions (audience reached) in promoting the consultation across Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook was 3,504.
- 3.7 Lessons learnt from the first Code of Conduct consultation would be applied prior to future consultations and review of the Code of Conduct. For example, the use of graphics and video content to explain the purpose of the consultation would be used in 'reels' and 'stories' in social media platforms, such as Instagram. In addition, the time of the year and number of other live public consultations would be reviewed, to avoid too many organisational public consultations at any one time.
- 3.8 Appendix B show the survey results in its entirety, which include the demographic of respondents.
- 3.9 This report is a recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee from their meeting held on 23 March 2022. Based on the survey, (Appendix B) Members are asked to note the survey results and approve the adoption of the RBFA Code of Conduct.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.2 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications relevant to the report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

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

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Audit and Governance Committee – 23 March 2022
- 11.2 Audit and Governance Committee Minute reference 38 – 24 January 2022.
- 11.3 Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct.
- 11.4 Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England).

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – RBFA Member Code of Conduct
- 12.2 Appendix B – RBFA Member Code of Conduct survey results

13. CONTACT DETAILS

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

DRAFT Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Member Code of Conduct

April 2022





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Code of Conduct

Joint Statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors. As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations. Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public. This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments. All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct. The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit- for purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "councillor" means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A "co-opted member" is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;

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- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint subcommittee of the authority; and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles (Appendix A).

Building on these principles, and of those of the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) Code of Ethics (Appendix C) the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor. In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community

- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

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Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct.

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

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

Councillors are required to comply with any formal standards investigation conducted by the Monitoring Officer and Independent Persons.

If there is a conflict of interest in the Authority's Monitoring Officer carrying out the investigation, a Monitoring Officer from a neighbouring Authority will be asked to conduct the formal investigation.

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

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

- 1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.
- 1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidating or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's **Member/Officer protocol**.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic commitments, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

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As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

Officers work for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority as a whole and must be politically neutral. They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - iv. the disclosure is:
 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and
 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and
 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined

circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority resources and facilities**

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority resources.**

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's** requirements;**
and

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- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority** or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

- 8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**
- 8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**
- 8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**
- 8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in Table 1, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to

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your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendix One – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

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Appendix Two - Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests).

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in Table 1, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in Table 2), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in Table 2

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) affects the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

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10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the Subject Description Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation Page 13 of 16 Approved 3rd 12.2020 Updated 19 January and 17 May 2021 councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude,

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	interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issues share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

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Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix Three - Core Code of Ethics Principles are:

Putting our communities first

We put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first.

Integrity

We act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do.

Dignity and respect

We treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership

We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership.

We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, within RBFA, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the wider communities in which we serve.

We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

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Appendix Four – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on Local Government Ethical Standards. If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

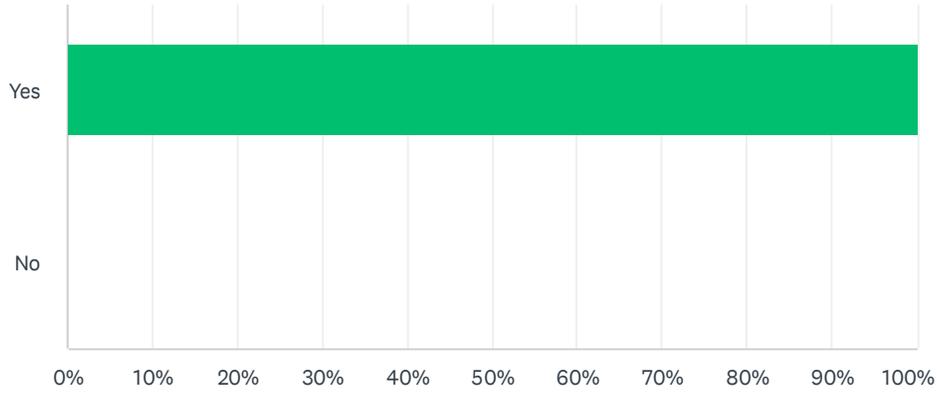
The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Agenda Item 15

Appendix A

Q1 In order to continue, you must confirm that you agree with the conditions above.

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

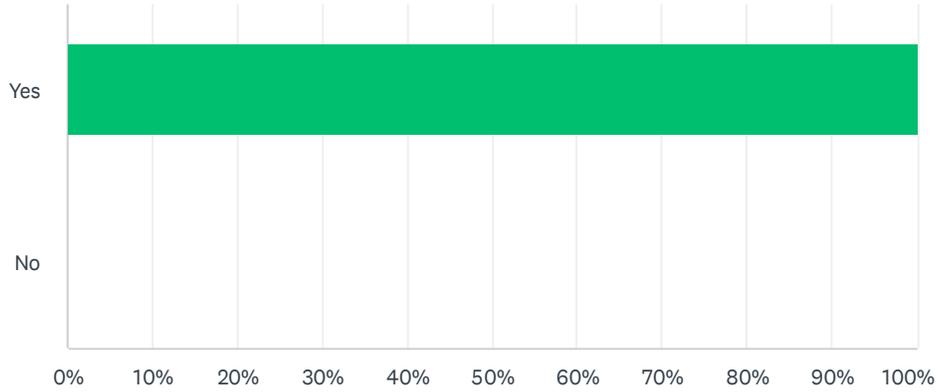


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	44
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		44

Appendix B

Q2 Do you support the behaviours required of councillors, as set out in the Draft RBFA Code of Conduct when they are publicly representing Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on official business and when using social media?

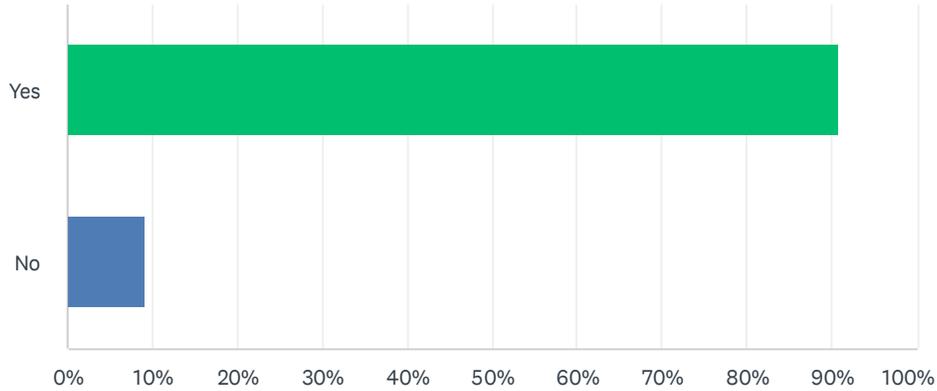
Answered: 24 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	24
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		24

Q3 Do you think the expected standards of councillor conduct and the actions that could be taken should an allegation be made, are clear?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 22

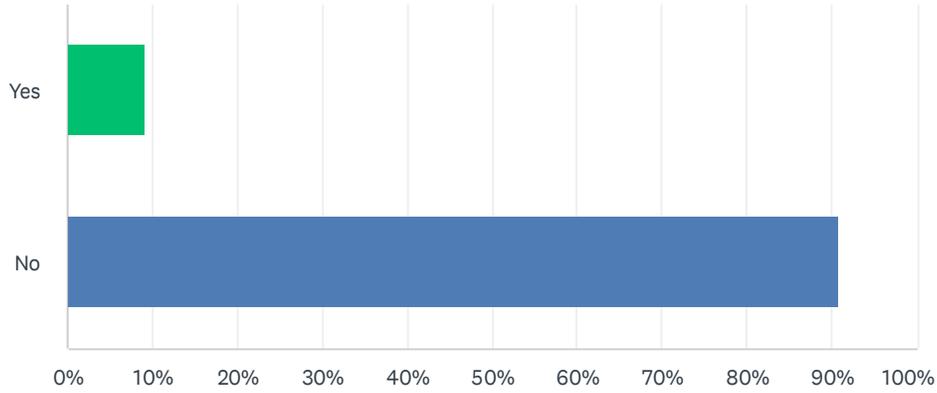


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.91%	20
No	9.09%	2
TOTAL		22

Appendix B

Q4 Have you got any other comments you would like to make on the Draft RBFA Model Code of Conduct.

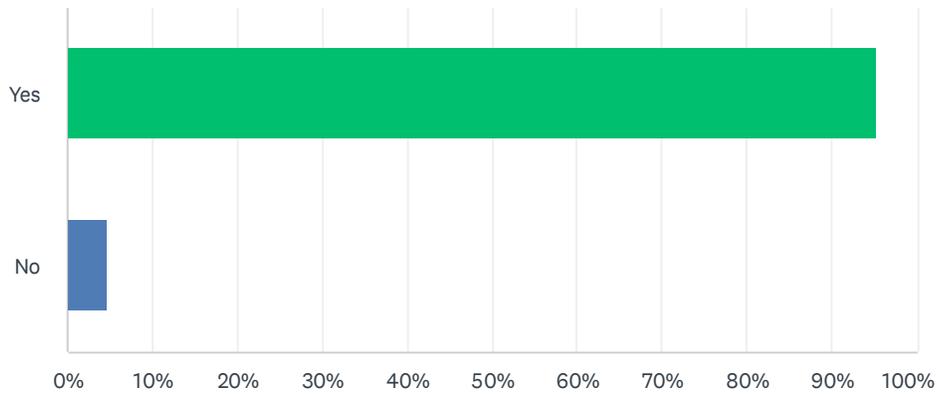
Answered: 22 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	9.09%	2
No	90.91%	20
TOTAL		22

Q5 Would you be happy to complete these questions?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 23

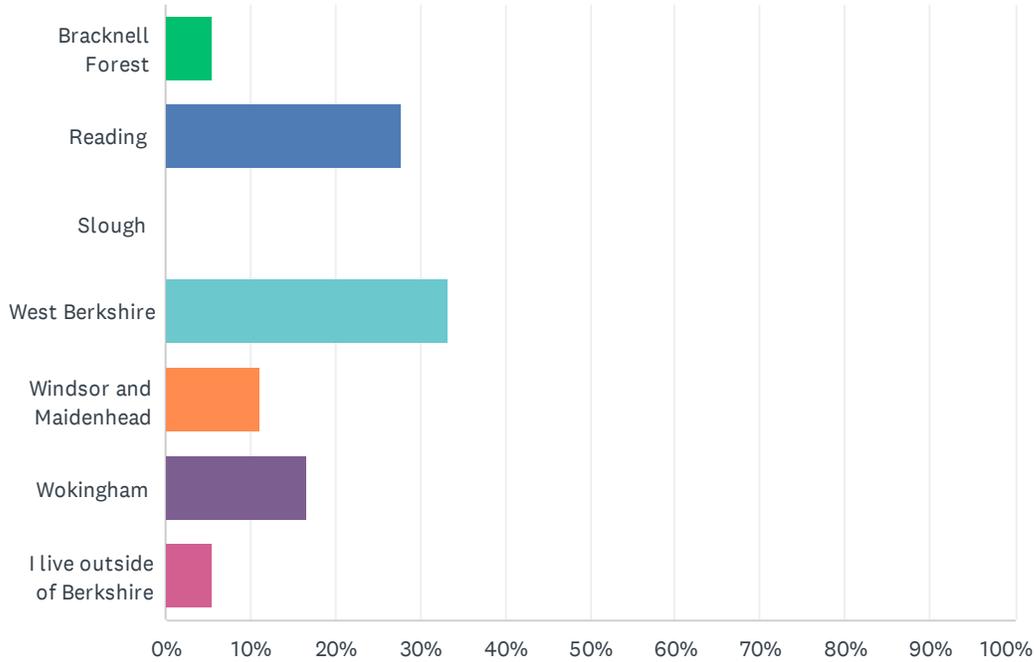


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95.24%	20
No	4.76%	1
TOTAL		21

Appendix B

Q6 If you are a resident of Berkshire, please select which Unitary Authority you live in

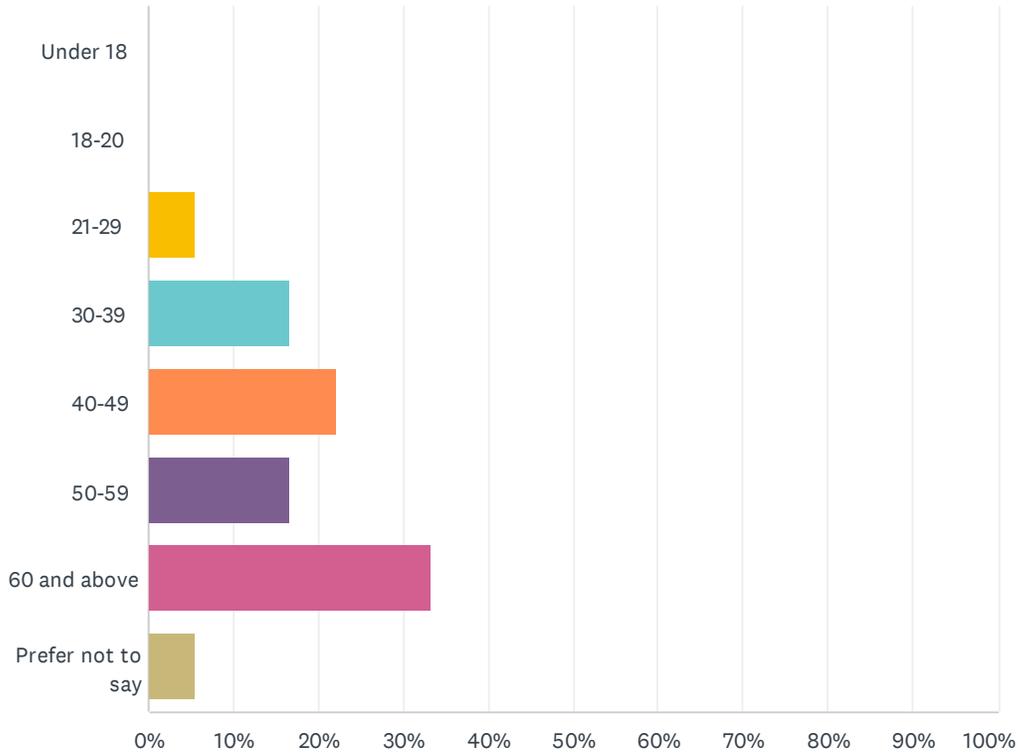
Answered: 18 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Bracknell Forest	5.56% 1
Reading	27.78% 5
Slough	0.00% 0
West Berkshire	33.33% 6
Windsor and Maidenhead	11.11% 2
Wokingham	16.67% 3
I live outside of Berkshire	5.56% 1
TOTAL	18

Q7 What is your age?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 26

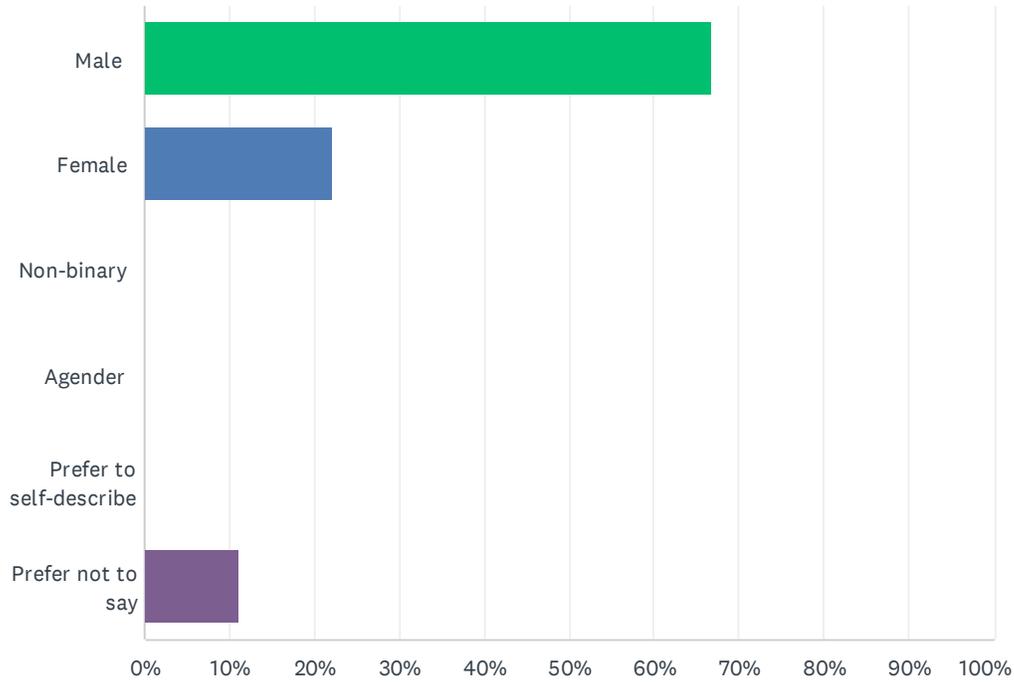


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-20	0.00%	0
21-29	5.56%	1
30-39	16.67%	3
40-49	22.22%	4
50-59	16.67%	3
60 and above	33.33%	6
Prefer not to say	5.56%	1
TOTAL		18

Appendix B

Q8 Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

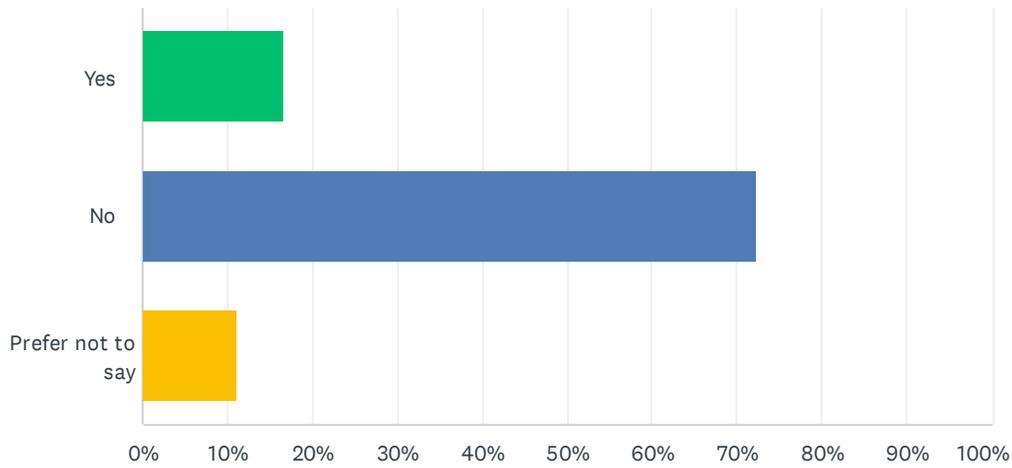
Answered: 18 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	66.67%	12
Female	22.22%	4
Non-binary	0.00%	0
Agender	0.00%	0
Prefer to self-describe	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	11.11%	2
TOTAL		18

Q9 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 26

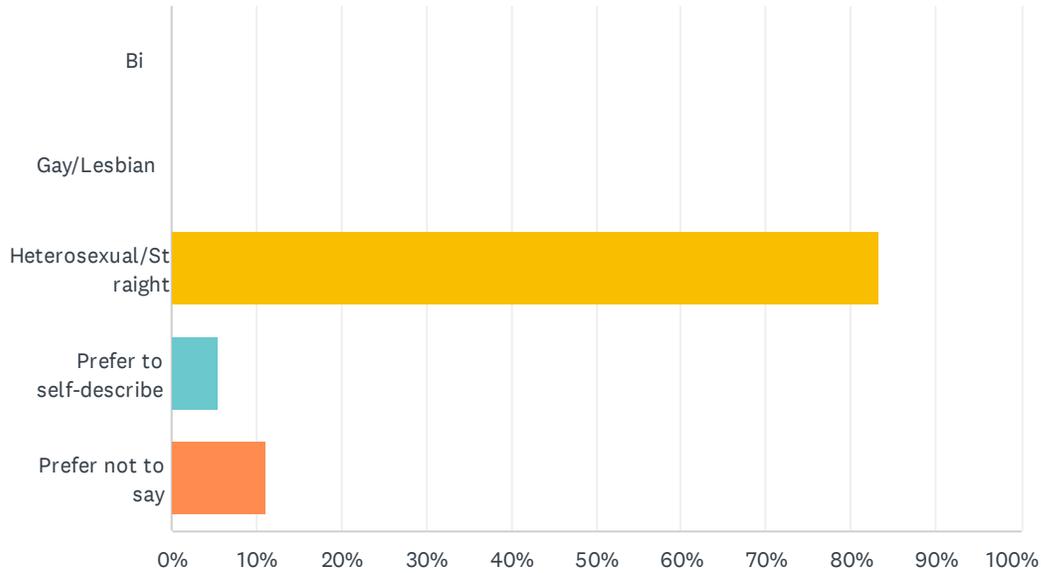


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.67%	3
No	72.22%	13
Prefer not to say	11.11%	2
TOTAL		18

Appendix B

Q10 Which of the following best describes your Sexual Orientation?

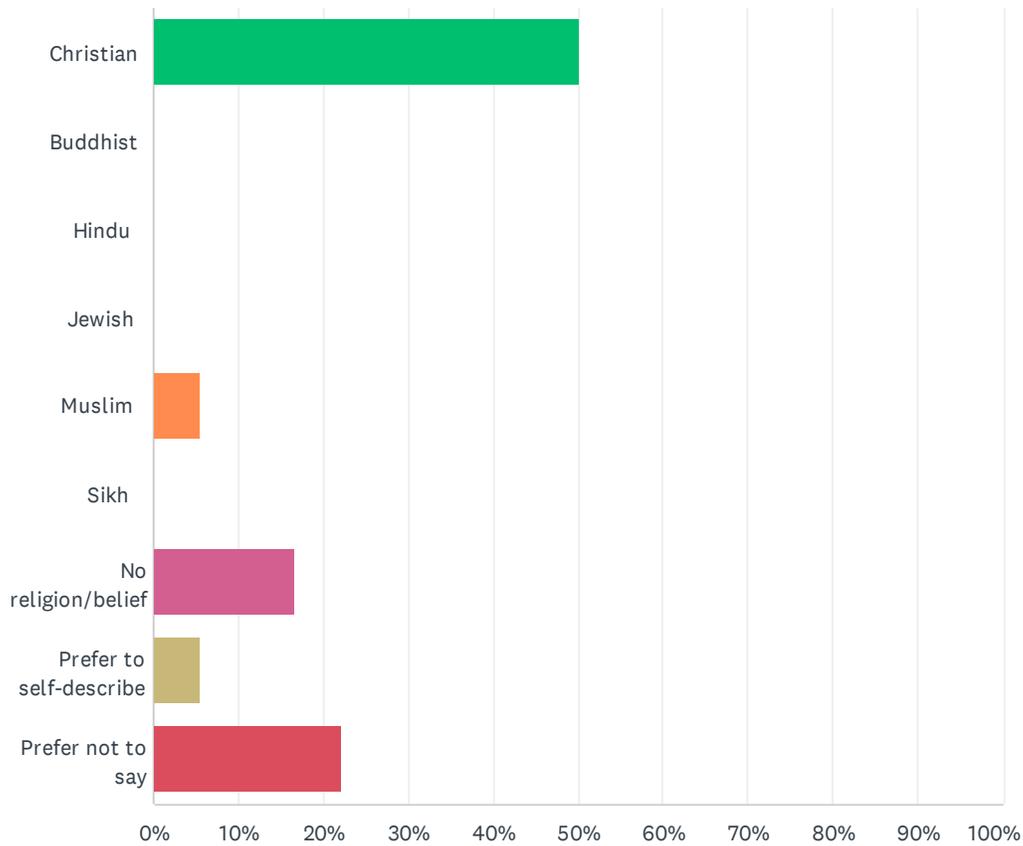
Answered: 18 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bi	0.00%	0
Gay/Lesbian	0.00%	0
Heterosexual/Straight	83.33%	15
Prefer to self-describe	5.56%	1
Prefer not to say	11.11%	2
TOTAL		18

Q11 Which of the following best describes your Religion?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 26

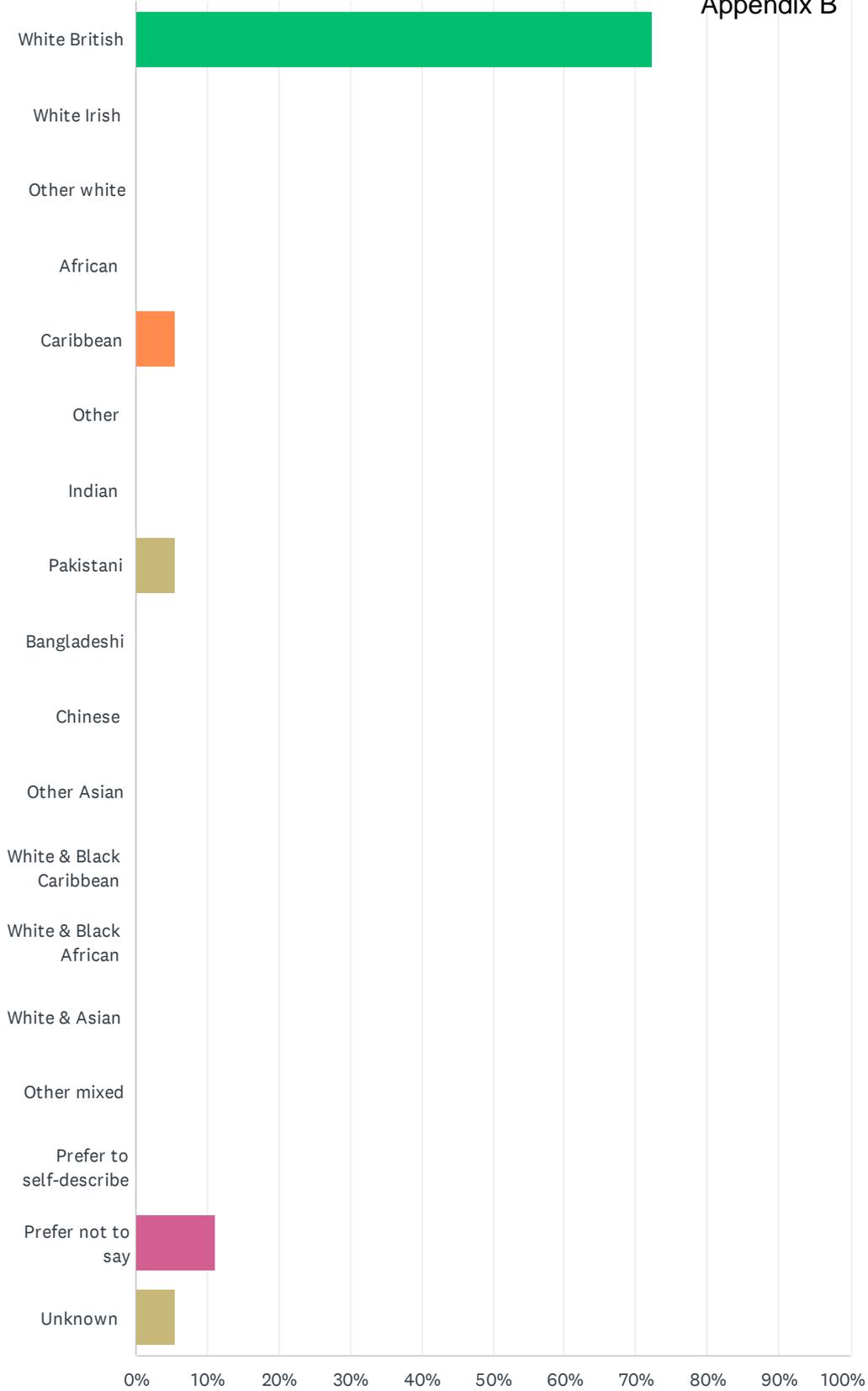


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Christian	50.00%	9
Buddhist	0.00%	0
Hindu	0.00%	0
Jewish	0.00%	0
Muslim	5.56%	1
Sikh	0.00%	0
No religion/belief	16.67%	3
Prefer to self-describe	5.56%	1
Prefer not to say	22.22%	4
TOTAL		18

Appendix B

Q12 Which of the following best describes your Ethnic Group?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 26

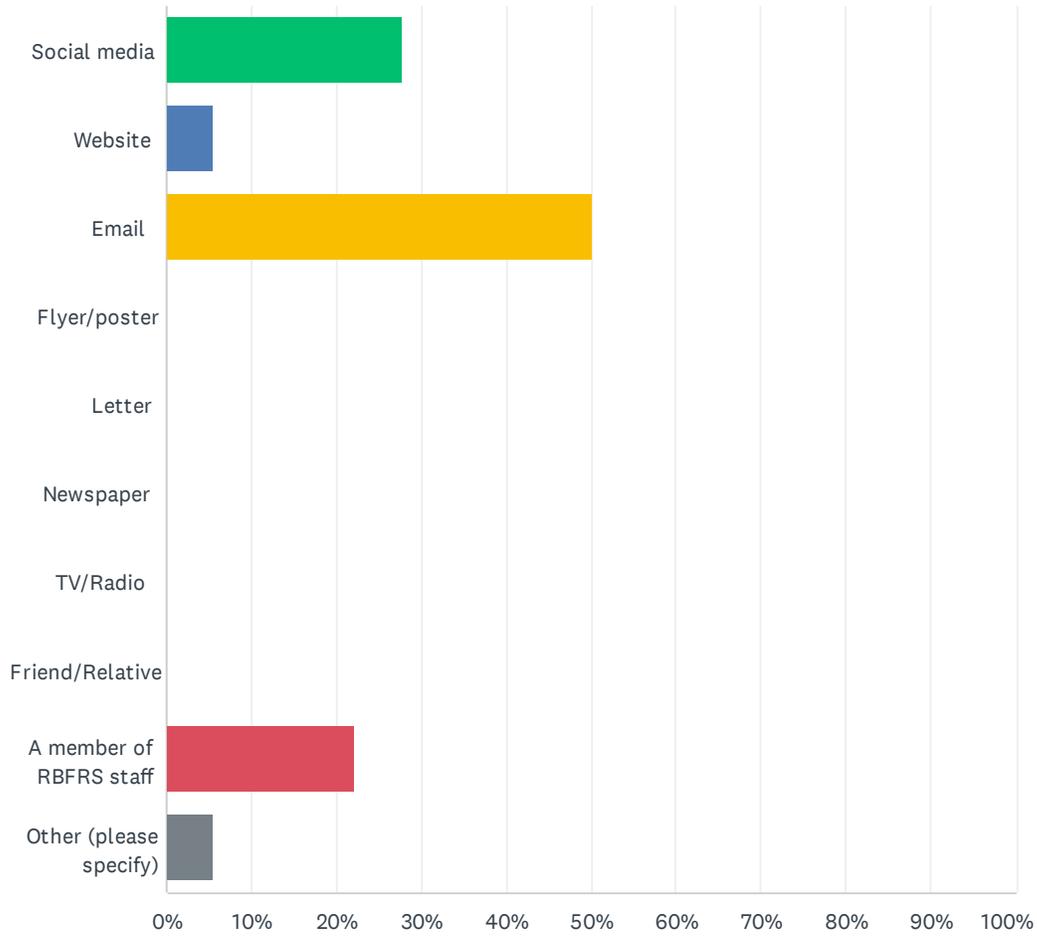


Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Code of Conduct
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ANSWER CHOICES	Appendix B	RESPONSES	
White British		72.22%	13
White Irish		0.00%	0
Other white		0.00%	0
African		0.00%	0
Caribbean		5.56%	1
Other		0.00%	0
Indian		0.00%	0
Pakistani		5.56%	1
Bangladeshi		0.00%	0
Chinese		0.00%	0
Other Asian		0.00%	0
White & Black Caribbean		0.00%	0
White & Black African		0.00%	0
White & Asian		0.00%	0
Other mixed		0.00%	0
Prefer to self-describe		0.00%	0
Prefer not to say		11.11%	2
Unknown		5.56%	1
TOTAL			18

Q13 How did you hear about this consultation?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 26



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Code of Conduct
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ANSWER CHOICES	Appendix B	RESPONSES	
Social media		27.78%	5
Website		5.56%	1
Email		50.00%	9
Flyer/poster		0.00%	0
Letter		0.00%	0
Newspaper		0.00%	0
TV/Radio		0.00%	0
Friend/Relative		0.00%	0
A member of RBFRS staff		22.22%	4
Other (please specify)		5.56%	1
Total Respondents: 18			



ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT FRAMEWORK
LEAD OFFICER	BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	N/A
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the latest position in relation to immediate detriment cases under the McCloud/ Sargeant ruling and provides an update on the legislative position and information received into Service impacting recommendations.
- 1.2 On 8 October 2021, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Fire Brigades Union announced that they had reached agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding and Framework for addressing such cases.
- 1.3 A report was presented to the Management Committee on 7 December 2021 on the Immediate Detriment Framework, which included a supplementary report detailing information received from the HM Treasury on the processing of immediate detriment cases and the withdrawal of its guidance on the management of immediate detriment cases. At the meeting on 7 December the Management Committee agreed the partial adoption of the Framework for 'Category 1' individuals only at that time.
- 1.4 It was agreed on 7 December that following assessment and consideration of any further information on how best to proceed and support individuals affected, the Fire Authority would be invited to further consider the position in relation to the full adoption of the Framework to include 'Category 2' individuals (those who have had benefits brought into payment).
- 1.5 Information relating to the impacts of adopting the Framework was brought to the attention of the Chief Fire Officer on 5 April and subsequently the report due to be considered by the Management Committee on that date had to be

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deferred. Following examination of this new information, it is recommended that the Authority does not adopt the Immediate Detriment Framework for Category 2 members until the impacts of the interplay with the tax system and impacts to individuals, employers and scheme managers can be clarified.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of the report;
- 2.2 **AGREE** that the Authority does not adopt the Immediate Detriment Framework for Category 2 members at this time.

3 REPORT

Background

- 3.1 On 8 October 2021, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Fire Bridge Union (FBU) announced that they had reached agreement on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Framework for dealing with Immediate Detriment cases.
- 3.2 Information received from the HM Treasury (HMT) on the 29 November 2021, stated that the Home Office had withdrawn its guidance in relation to immediate detriment cases and that immediate detriment cases should not be processed due to emerging complexities regarding, in the main, issues of taxation. At the time of writing, no additional guidance from the Home Office on this matter has been provided.
- 3.3 The background information regarding the Immediate Detriment Framework was presented to Management Committee on 7 December together with a supplementary report addressing the impacts of the withdrawal of guidance. This report set out the complexities associated with the situation, the detail and impact of adopting the Framework.
- 3.4 Following consideration of the 7 December 2021 papers, Management Committee resolved to partially adopt the Framework for Category 1 individuals only, on the basis that not doing so, would create significant issues for the health and wellbeing of individuals, for employee relations and risk costly legal action.
- 3.5 An evaluation of the position for Category 2 individuals i.e. those members who have had benefits brought into payment, has been undertaken. Having considered the overall position, impacts to individuals, the Service, and the ability/resource to undertake calculations and actions by HR and the pension administrator West Yorkshire Pension Fund, it is recommended that the Immediate Detriment Framework should not yet be adopted for Category 2 members.
- 3.6 On 23 March 2022, HM Treasury responded to the Firefighters' Pension England Scheme Advisory Board enquiries regarding the processing of

immediate detriment cases. Treasury in their response (Appendix A) set out more detail relating to the withdrawal of their informal and non-statutory guidance on the processing of such cases, emphasising the risks regarding in a number of areas, namely:

- Tax relief on contributions for members who paid contributions to the reformed scheme
- Payments of benefits to date
- New or increased lump sum payments
Annual Allowance tax charges
- Lifetime Allowance charge

- 3.7 The letter provides significant concern for Officers who recognise that in addition to the tax issues indicated above, other aspects of the remedying arrangements are not yet clarified and will not be until secondary legislation is in place. Whilst the overall objective is to ensure individuals affected by the discrimination are afforded access to their benefits as soon as practicable, the uncertainty, absence of reliable information and the associated risks to individuals, employers and scheme managers of additional tax charges, has been considered in recommending that the Framework is not adopted for Category 2 members at this time.
- 3.8 Officers have considered the position for Category 1 members and the previous decision of the Authority to adopt the Framework. Whilst these risks remain significant, it is considered that to reverse the decision would create additional employee relations challenges, impacting individuals in respect of their ability to retire.
- 3.9 The Fire Brigade's Union have been advised of the recommendation in this report and affected members will be written to accordingly, advising them of the position of the Authority.

Legislation

- 3.10 On 8 March 2022 the Home Office published its consultation response on prospective remedy. This confirms the amendments to the pension regulations delivering the first set of changes to remove transitional protections from the Firefighter Pension Scheme 2015. This document also confirms provision of the ill health underpin and treating cases no less favourable where they are being processed prior to 31 March 2022 and determination is after that date. It also allows members purchasing service in legacy schemes by periodical contributions entered into before 1 April 2022 to contribute after that date.
- 3.11 Changes enact policy announced in February 2021 and are consequential to the Public Services Pensions and Judicial Offices Act (PSPJO Act) which received Royal Assent on 10 March 2022. The main purpose of the PSPJO Act is to implement the "deferred choice underpin" remedy adopted by the government to correct the unlawful age discrimination identified by the Court of Appeal. The PSPJO Act includes provisions relating to scheme members already in receipt of benefits, tax liabilities, annual allowances, and the power to make further regulations. It is not yet clear to Officers the extent to which the PSPJO Act could retrospectively mitigate the risks identified in the HMT letter.

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- 3.12 The consultation response only covers amendments to the first phase, i.e. removing the discrimination found in the McCloud/ Sargeant case by closing legacy schemes and ensuring all members are treated as members of the reformed career average scheme from 1 April 2022. The second phase will address the retrospective remedy, move all members' service back into the legacy final salary scheme for the remedy period (1 April 2015 – 31 March 2022) and allow a choice of benefits for this period. This aspect is both technical and complex and will be subject to consultation in 2022.
- 3.13 Other aspects affecting remedy will need to be dealt with through the Finance Act 2022 and tax regulations

4 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is not possible at this stage to identify the specific costs associated with progressing these cases however; the recent communication from HM Treasury indicates that the uncertainty and issues relating to taxation could have significant impacts to individuals, employers and pension schemes.
- 5.2 HM Treasury state that the ability to provide tax relief on any lump sum paid is uncertain, indicating a lack of clarity on which scheme the amount paid arises from and that this, as a result, could attract tax.
- 5.3 FRAs will bear the costs associated with any unauthorised tax charge which arise as a result of adjustments to pensions which are paid 12 months after the initial payment was made. It was expected that changes to tax legislation would address this but such legislation is not currently in place. The sum of any charges arising in this situation are not known, as these need to be calculated on an individual basis.
- 5.4 HM Treasury in their letter of 23 March 2022 list a number of concerns regarding the processing of immediate detriment cases. Specifically they refer to the potential legalities of tax relief having been applied to the reformed scheme and whether an ability is provided by legislation to judge this as being offset against the legacy scheme. They note the administrative requirement for correcting Real Time Information (RTI) submissions for previous tax years (employers) and corrections required to any self-assessment (individuals).
- 5.5 HM Treasury indicate individual member liabilities in relation to the Annual Allowance charges arising from changes that may also result in a requirement for the individual to meet a late payment charge and impacts to Lifetime Allowances where individuals have paid these themselves.
- 5.6 It is expected that the costs associated with the administration of the remedy will be borne by FRAs whilst monies owed to members will be met by Government. However, there remains significant uncertainty regarding the

recovery of these costs and the short term impact on the revenue account. Clarity on this matter is awaited from the Home Office.

- 5.7 It is recognised that not applying the Immediate Detriment Framework to Category 2 members could lead to further legal action by individuals and the Fire Brigades' Union resulting in further litigation costs.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Authority finds itself in a very difficult position, trying to provide members with access to the correct pension benefits without creating additional risks and liabilities for individuals, the authority and pension schemes. There remains a lack of clarity and guidance on the position.

- 6.2 There is a risk that the decision to not apply the Framework to Category 2 members could result in further legal action by individuals and the Fire Brigade's Union, particularly as arrangements are in place for Category 1 members. The crux of the dilemma is summarised in the joint letter from the Local Government Association and the FBU dated 4 April 2022 to HMT and the Home Office (Appendix B)

“We accept that there are, as set out in the HMT note, significant difficulties in making some payments, in particular those connected with contributions until the tax position becomes clear and we would be happy to discuss with you how best to make progress in this area. The Claimants in any new proceedings will claim that they are entitled to damages that place them in the same position, net of any tax, that they would have found themselves in if there had been no discriminatory treatment (as did the Claimants in the proceedings that have already been issued and settled). If we assume that the court determines the claim in favour of the Claimants and grants the relief sought, at best, from the FRAs' perspective, that would mean having to pay compensation in respect of any additional tax charges and then spending very considerable administrative time and expense seeking recovery of the tax paid from HRMC. At worst it would mean paying compensation in respect of the tax and not being able to recover it.”

- 6.3 In coming to the decision to recommend that the Authority does not adopt the Framework for Category 2 members at this time, Officers considered that these members are already in receipt of some pension benefits and that any adjustment to these in the short term, could create significant consequences for individuals, as well as the Service and the Pension Administrator. Resolving any issue of taxation that might arise before changes to legislation could lead to significant administrative challenges with HMRC for individuals in addition to employers and could be disproportionate to any benefits received.

7 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

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- 7.1 There is some risk of discrimination in that this report proposes that the Immediate Detriment Framework is not applied to Category 2 members at this time. The rationale for this decision is set out in this report.
- 7.2 The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.3 RBFA is able to rely on Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) judgment in the Sargeant case, (reported to the Fire Authority on 17 February 2021) and, in particular, can rely on the ruling that Section 61 of the Equality Act 2010 means that the discriminatory provisions in a pension scheme are automatically, by law, set aside and disapplied. In addition, Section 62 empowers trustees and managers of pension schemes to make non-discrimination alterations to a scheme issued through resolutions effecting those changes. The HM Treasury letter of 23 March 2022 however, states that it is unclear what effect the application of Section 61 would have in relation to the treatment of payments made under the reformed scheme in relation to payments made in accordance legacy schemes under Immediate Detriment, ahead of any legislation providing the mechanism and clarity.
- 7.4 The Service has already received a number of enquiries from retired members in relation to the MoU and Framework for Category 2 adoption. They have been advised that further information will be provided regarding the adoption of the Framework in due course.

8 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 As indicated in section 5 above, clarity is awaited on the recovery of costs. It is understood that the processing of Immediate Detriment cases before the forthcoming changes to tax exemptions, will mean FRAs are liable for any unauthorised tax charge and this will not be met centrally by Government.
- 8.2 There are significant changes to firefighter pension schemes and the outcomes of the changes to the legislation will result in wide ranging impacts for the administration of firefighter pension schemes for many years to come.
- 8.3 There are likely to be continued challenges in undertaking calculations for some Immediate Detriment cases (Category 1 members) because the legislation and guidance on some technical aspects do not exist.
- 8.4 To ensure the Service is in a position to act quickly in response to legislation and minimise risk as much as possible, individual records are being reviewed and prepared in conjunction with the payroll provider.
- 8.5 The impact of changes to firefighter pension schemes is noted as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register. While the MoU and Framework do not directly address any of the budgetary or resourcing impacts, it does reduce the risk of a potential failure to comply with legal requirements for Category 1 members.
- 8.6 The communication from HM Treasury has highlighted further risk and uncertainty. Whilst it is clear that there remains significant financial risks and burdens there is a lack of clarity on the wider impacts of this latest

communication. The LGA Pension Team are considering the various aspects within the Treasury Note and will write to fire and rescue authorities with further information as soon as possible.

9 CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

1.2 The Memorandum of Understanding and Framework are available for all fire and rescue services to adopt.

9.2 Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority shares the same pension administrator. The Authorities have sought to understand the position jointly, seeking advice and sharing information.

10 PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

1.3 The Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive has been consulted on the contents of this paper.

1.4 The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on the contents of this paper.

1.5 The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on the contents of this paper

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Fire Authority Report – Immediate Detriment Cases – 17 February 2021

11.2 Management Committee report and Appendices - Immediate Detriment Framework - 7 December 2021

11.3 Management Committee report - Immediate Detriment Framework Revised Recommendation – 7 December 2021

12 APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – HM Treasury Letter to Chair, Firefighters’ Pension (England) Scheme Advisory Board

12.2 Appendix B – LGA and FBU joint letter dated 4 April 2022.

13 CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and Learning and Development 07776 225975

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Joanne Livingstone
Chair, Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board
By email

23 March 2022

Dear Joanne

Thank you for your letter of 17 December to HM Treasury regarding the processing of immediate detriment (ID) cases in the Firefighters' pension scheme. I apologise for the delay in replying.

You have asked for more detail on the factors behind the withdrawal of the Home Office's informal and non-statutory guidance on processing certain ID cases, and in particular the risks and uncertainties of relying on Section 61 of the Equality Act to remedy benefits in advance of retrospective regulations.

I appreciate that this is a difficult situation for scheme managers in the Firefighters scheme, for the reasons you have set out, and the SAB's understandable desire to have the best information possible to inform future discussions. I will therefore set out these issues in detail.

The fundamental difficulty is that retrospectively changing pension entitlement through section 61 of the Equality Act 2010 cannot mitigate all of the consequences that arise from that. Legislation is therefore needed to address these consequences, particularly in respect of the complicated interplay with the tax system which is dependent on changing facts. The tax system requires certainty about the nature of payments made to and from pension schemes in the past in order to operate predictably and to produce proportionate results.

In some situations, processing cases without the full remedy legislation, including on tax, could lead to disadvantageous outcomes. The Public Services and Judicial Offices Act addresses some of these issues but others will need to be addressed through secondary legislation, the Finance Act 2022 and tax regulations. Legislation is also necessary to allow compensation to be paid by scheme managers, for example where an individual has overpaid tax beyond the usual statutory time limits for claiming it back.

I will now set out some of the detail of the specific tax issues that may arise and will be dealt with through legislation:

1. Tax relief on contributions for members who paid contributions to the reformed scheme.
 - If section 61 was used so that these members never left the legacy scheme for the remedy period, the effect would be that amounts deducted from their earnings and paid as pension contributions to the reformed scheme were paid incorrectly, because they were not a member of that scheme. This matters for tax purposes because only active members of a scheme are entitled to tax relief on their contributions.

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Appendix A

- Tax relief can be given at the point the contributions are paid, and the legacy scheme and reformed scheme are two separate registered pension schemes. It is unclear what effect section 61 has on the contributions that were paid to the reformed scheme; it is not certain that section 61 means they can be assumed to have been paid to the legacy scheme. If section 61 can't be interpreted in that way, there is a separation of the members' contributions and the service, which mean that members were not entitled to the tax relief they received on their pension contributions (as they were not active members).
 - Employers would therefore need to correct their RTI submissions for the relevant tax years to remove the tax relief that was given incorrectly. This would probably require the contributions to be returned by the scheme to the employer and then for the employer to pay them to the correct scheme, which would give tax relief at that point, but this may not equal the tax relief that members were entitled to previously. In addition, any contributions payable by or due to be returned to the member in respect of the tax years 2015-15 to 2021-22 because differences in contribution rates will also impact on their tax position, meaning that those who submit self assessment returns will need to contact HMRC to amend the information they declared previously.
 - The provisions to address this are made in the PSP&JO Act, which will require commencement through scheme regulations, and in forthcoming legislation to allow tax relief to apply to contributions made during the remedy period years and for any contributions corrections to be made without the need for correcting RTI submissions.
 - The combination of the PSP&JO Act, scheme regulations and tax regulations will alleviate the administrative burdens on the member, the scheme and the employer but if ID cases were processed prior to those statutory changes, existing legislation will apply. The full amount of historic contributions to a scheme where the individual is not a member would be taxable and a tax charge will be due as a result, that may not equal the tax relief the individual will be entitled to when the contributions are made to the correct scheme. So individuals in this situation may still need to have their position revised when the provisions of the PSP&JO Act are brought in.
2. Payment of benefits to date.
- Where an ID case is processed before legislation, there is uncertainty as to the status of payments that have been made from the Reformed Scheme to an individual who, according to section 61, is not a member of that scheme. It is not clear whether under section 61 the amounts paid would be assumed to have been paid by the legacy scheme. There is a risk that if the amount that was paid as a tax-free lump sum is seen as being paid from the reformed scheme, it would be taxable because it does not meet the conditions to be paid tax free as the individual is a member of the legacy scheme. Once commenced through scheme regulations, provisions in the PSP&JO Act will have the effect of treating pension benefits arising from remediable service paid out of the Reformed Scheme as having been paid out of the Legacy Scheme, clarifying the section 61 position.
3. New or increased lump sum payments.
- There could also be issues where the operation of section 61 Equality Act 2010 means that an individual has not been paid sufficient lump sum under the legacy scheme, because any further lump sum payment will be tax free only if the pension supporting the lump sum started no more than 12 months prior to the adjustment. If it is outside this time limit the adjusted lump sum would also be an unauthorised payment and an unauthorised payments charge would apply before tax legislation is in place to address this.

4. Annual allowance tax charge.

- An individual's liability for an annual allowance tax charge is calculated by deducting their pension value at the start of the year from the value at the end of the year in that pension scheme. If ID cases were processed using section 61 this could lead to a situation where those values were incorrectly reported because the member was recorded as building up service in the Reformed Scheme instead of the Legacy Scheme.
- This could lead to considerable difficulties where the Reformed Scheme had reported and paid an individual's annual allowance charge. The whole payment would need to be unwound as there would be no basis for the Reformed Scheme to pay the individual's tax charge as they were not a member of the scheme. The scheme would have to adjust the return on which they originally paid the charge (which may also have an administrative impact on the scheme in relation to any tax they have paid subsequently as tax is paid on a scheme basis). The individual would then owe their annual allowance charge and interest for late payment. Similarly, any overpaid annual allowance charges for out of scope years would need to be compensated, and as set out above, in advance of legislation there are no provisions in place to enable this.

5. Lifetime Allowance Charge

- Issues might arise with respect to lifetime allowance charges paid by the reformed scheme in relation to a member who, as a result of the operation of section 61, was always a member of the legacy scheme. The reformed scheme would need to claim a refund of the tax paid (where they were in time to do so), adjusting the return on which they originally paid the charge (which may also have an administrative impact on the scheme).
- The legacy scheme would now be liable to pay (i) any lifetime allowance charges in relation to that member's rights. and, (ii) any benefits payable under those rights. It is unclear what effect section 61 would have on the benefits that have been paid to the individual, whether it follows that these benefits must have been paid by the legacy scheme or the reformed scheme made payments to individuals who were not members. Depending on the interpretation of the operation of section 61 in relation to pension benefits already paid, the legacy scheme may be liable to pay benefits including amounts already paid by the reformed scheme. Legislation will be required to address these issues.
- In addition, if a member has paid their lifetime allowance charge themselves and section 61 provides that they were a member of their legacy scheme, where this provides for a lower charge, they can notify HMRC to claim for the overpayment. However, where the charge was paid for a year beyond the usual statutory time limits for correction of tax, compensation for this would not be available until the full remedy legislation is in place.

I hope that this gives you further insight into the tax issues that are likely to arise where ID cases are dealt with prior to legislation being in place and assists in future SAB discussions.

I would also note that, in addition to these tax issues, there are also other aspects of the remedy that remain to be determined and/or consulted upon on a scheme specific basis, such as how interest is to be calculated and paid on amounts that are owed to the scheme or by the scheme to a member or the specifics of rights of appeal.

For all of these reasons, the Government's view remains that processing immediate detriment cases before all of the necessary legislation is in place could give rise to significant consequences for schemes and members, although that ultimately is a decision for individual scheme managers. I also

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Appendix A

recognise that this places scheme managers in a difficult position and we will continue to work with Home Office colleagues and others to explore any mitigations, where this is possible.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the Scheme Advisory Board's continued constructive engagement in helping to resolve the complex and difficult issues necessary to design and implement a legislative remedy.

Yours sincerely,

Henry Elks
Deputy Director
Workforce Pay and Pensions Team
HM Treasury



Henry Elks
Deputy Director
Workforce Pay and Pensions Team
HM Treasury
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Peter Spreadbury
Deputy Director
Public Safety Group
Home Office
peter.spreadbury@homeoffice.gov.uk

4 April 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Messrs Elks and Spreadbury,

Firefighters Pension Scheme - Age discrimination remedy

This letter is submitted jointly by the Local Government Association (LGA) on behalf of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), and by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on behalf of their members.

We cannot express strongly enough our continued frustration at the government's failure, as expressed by HM Treasury and Home Office, to support FRAs in ensuring affected FPS members are placed in the position required by the Court of Appeal in December 2018 (McCloud/Sargeant), prior to implementation of remedy legislation. Affected members are those who have, or are, taking benefits prior to the implementation of remedy legislation and therefore could face an immediate detriment.

As you are aware from discussions beforehand and correspondence with the LGA, we agreed a framework in October 2021 designed to make payments to FPS members in scope of remedy within existing legal powers on the basis that it would mitigate or avoid an immediate detriment to such members, therefore avoiding the need for continued legal action by those members.

Since that time we have seen the withdrawal of the Home Office Guidance and the position of HM Treasury, as expressed in the accompanying note, of opposing any possible solution for scheme members other than waiting for final regulations in October 2023. This has left FRA's in a position of uncertainty and affected scheme members are actively preparing legal action once again.

Should such action commence, that would again mean a separate set of proceedings running in parallel to the proceedings currently before the Employment

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Tribunal, and also wholly avoidable legal costs to FRA's (and ultimately the taxpayer). ^{Appendix B}

We accept that there are, as set out in the HMT note, significant difficulties in making some payments, in particular those connected with contributions until the tax position becomes clear and we would be happy to discuss with you how best to make progress in this area. The Claimants in any new proceedings will claim that they are entitled to damages that place them in the same position, net of any tax, that they would have found themselves in if there had been no discriminatory treatment (as did the Claimants in the proceedings that have already been issued and settled). If we assume that the court determines the claim in favour of the Claimants and grants the relief sought, at best, from the FRAs' perspective, that would mean having to pay compensation in respect of any additional tax charges and then spending very considerable administrative time and expense seeking recovery of the tax paid from HRMC. At worst it would mean paying compensation in respect of the tax and not being able to recover it.

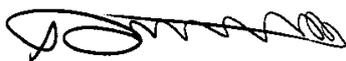
We do not however see any issues with the immediate payment of pension arrears or arrears of lump sum for those within 12 months of leaving and would be grateful for your support in making such payments, in particular, by confirming that such payments will be treated no differently from payments of pension outside of the scope of remedy with regard to funding.

Furthermore, with the Finance No 2 Bill gaining Royal Assent it is entirely within the gift of HM Treasury to bring forward regulations to authorise the payment of lump sum arrears beyond 12 months of leaving and we would ask that this is progressed as soon as possible.

Finally, your stance in respect of the position of members who receive payments prior to the implementation of the remedy legislation not being able to be regularised by remedy legislation is unhelpful. Although we can appreciate your desire to be prudent in not providing 'carte blanche' for unreasonable payments, the provisions of both the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act and the Finance Act 2022 appear to provide more than adequate flexibility to ensure the regularisation of scheme members benefiting from a considered approach to immediate detriment cases.

None of us wish to see taxpayer money being wasted on legal actions which will no doubt merely confirm a scheme member's right to payments in line with the Court of Appeal's judgment. We stand ready to meet with you at any time to discuss how this regrettable situation can be avoided.

Yours sincerely,



Jo Donnelly
Local Government Association



Matt Wrack
Fire Brigades Union

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	2022/23 CORPORATE CALENDAR
LEAD OFFICER	NIKKI RICHARDS, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members are asked to agree the Corporate Calendar listing dates of Fire Authority and Committee meetings during 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **AGREE** that July 2022 Management Committee is moved to Monday 18 July 2022; and
- 2.2 **AGREE** the remainder of the 2022/23 Corporate Calendar dates (excluding Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee meeting dates)).

3. REPORT

- 3.1 On an annual basis, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Members are asked to approve its Corporate Calendar. This report is presented to the April Fire Authority following the approval of the unitary authorities' Council and committee meeting schedules.
- 3.2 The Democratic Support Team has worked closely with its counterparts in the six unitary authorities to avoid clashes with full Council and Fire Authority meetings. Members will note that it is impossible to avoid some clashes with all committee meetings Members have been appointed to within their

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respective Unitary Authorities, which may affect Member attendance at RBFA committee meetings.

- 3.3 Democratic Support usually considers Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission Conference in the planning of Fire Authority and committees meetings, however at the time writing unable to, due to those dates have not been published.
- 3.4 It has been identified that there will be a meeting clash with two Council meetings with Management Committee, currently scheduled on 19 July 2022. The report is proposing the 19 July 2022 Management Committee is moved to Monday 18 July 2022, highlighted in yellow in Appendix A.
- 3.5 Audit and Governance Committee recently agreed the Member Development action plan for 2022/23 on 23 March 2022. The Member Development Working Group have requested Member Development courses to be scheduled prior to Committee meetings. Therefore, throughout the year and as part of agenda packs, Members will receive invites to forthcoming courses.
- 3.6 Five Management Committee meetings have been programmed into the calendar during the year, however, subject to business need, additional meetings may be programmed into the Calendar as required.
- 3.7 The Audit and Governance Committee will continue to monitor the attendance of Members on an annual basis and feedback 2022/23 attendance figures to the Fire Authority in April 2023.
- 3.5 In 2022/23 Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee meetings will be hosted and held at Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. TVFCS Joint Committee meeting dates were agreed by Members of the Joint Committee.
- 3.6 2022/23 Fire Authority and Committee meeting dates will be subsequently added to Members calendars following the Fire Authority annual meeting in June 2022, when Members appointments to committees have been made.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 The business undertaken at the meetings proposed within the Calendar will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Commitments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Member Allowances and reimbursement of travel expenses has been identified as a financial implication. An annual review of Member Allowances and expenses is monitored by Audit and Governance Committee and will be presented to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority in June 2022.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No legal implications were identified for the purposes of this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There were no equality and diversity implications identified for the purposes of this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No risk implications were identified for the purposes of this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 Not applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Senior Leadership Team and Monitoring Officer was consulted in the preparation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A- 2022/23 Corporate Calendar.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead 0118 938 4611.

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS, COMMITTEES AND EVENTS 2022 /23

	Day and Start time	Venue	JUN 2022	JUL 2022	AUG 2022	SEPT 2022	OCT 2022	NOV 2022	DEC 2022	JAN 2023	FEB 2023	MAR 2023	APR 2023	MAY 2023	JUN 2023	JUL 2023
FIRE AUTHORITY	6.30pm	HQ	30					1			15		27		27	
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	6.30pm	HQ		18			11		6		7		3			17
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	6.30pm	HQ		28			17			23		28				25
THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE JOINT COMMITTEE	2.00pm	Bucks HQ		11					15							

RBFRS Headquarters (HQ), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, RG31 7SD

Good Friday 7 April 2023; Easter Monday 10 April 2023

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 APRIL 2022
SUBJECT	LEAD MEMBER AND MEMBER CHAMPION ANNUAL REPORTS
LEAD OFFICER	N/A
LEAD MEMBER	LEAD MEMBERS AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	TO NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To note Annual Reports up to April 2022 received from Lead Members and Member Champions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To **NOTE** the reports.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The attached appendices A-H detail the Annual Reports from the following Lead Members and Member Champions.
- a) Budget and Income Generation Lead Member – Councillor Benneyworth
 - b) Collaboration Lead Member – Councillor Cannon
 - c) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Lead Member – Councillor Smith
 - d) Strategic Assets Lead Member – Councillor Ross
 - e) Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing and Community Safety Member Champion – Councillor Bateson
 - f) Organisational Development Member Champion – Councillor Helliar-Symons

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- g) Armed Forces Honorary Member Champion – Councillor Ross
- h) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Honorary Member Champion – Councillor McKenzie-Boyle

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 1- We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.
- 4.2 Commitment 2- We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.
- 4.3 Commitment 3- We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4.4 Commitment 4- We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda.
- 4.5 Commitment 5- We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.6 Commitment 6- We will work with Central Government to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Please refer to individual reports.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 None for the purpose of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Not applicable.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A - Budget and Income Generation Lead Member- Councillor Benneyworth
- 12.2 Appendix B - Collaboration Lead Member – Councillor Cannon
- 12.3 Appendix C - Community Risk Management Plan Lead Member – Councillor Smith
- 12.4 Appendix D - Strategic Assets Lead Member – Councillor Ross
- 12.5 Appendix E - Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing, and Community Safety Member Champion – Councillor Bateson
- 12.6 Appendix F - Organisational Development Member Champion – Councillor Helliar-Symons
- 12.7 Appendix G – Armed Forces Honorary Member Champion – Councillor Ross
- 12.8 Appendix H – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Honorary Member Champion – Councillor McKenzie-Boyle

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Budget and Income Generation – Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) 0118 938 4720
- 13.2 Collaboration – Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer) 0118 938 4800
- 13.3 Community Risk Management Plan – Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services) 0118 938 4605
- 13.4 Community Safety – Doug Buchanan (Area Manager Response and Resilience) 07887 830207
- 13.5 Organisational Development– Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive) 0118 938 4702
- 13.6 Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development) 0118 938 4670
- 13.7 Armed Forces – Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) 0118 938 4605
- 13.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development) 0118 938 4670

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Budget and Income Generation

Review

There has been a significant deterioration in the macro-economic environment over the last few months. The Bank of England raised interest rates for a third time on 17 March, to 0.75%, as it warned that surging energy bills would push inflation higher than previously expected. The move to raise rates to 0.75% comes as CPI hit a 30-year high of 6.2% in February. The Bank said inflation was now on course to peak close to 8% in April, an upward adjustment to its previous forecast of 7.25%. The significant uplift in inflationary pressures is likely to feed through to pay awards negotiations and will push up the cost of supplies and services.

Since the mid-year update in November 2021, there has been positive news in relation to funding. Following on from the Chairman's lobbying for precept flexibility, the Government has recognised that fire authorities in the lowest quartile need greater flexibility around increasing the council tax precept to meet immediate pressures and build a sustainable funding model for the future.

The £5 increase in the precept in 2022/23 means that the Authority should have the funds to pay for the 2021/22 unbudgeted pay awards and also provide a reasonable level of investment in the Authority's fleet and ICT assets. Without the additional precept flexibility the Authority would have faced another shortfall on the Revenue Budget which would have meant using reserves in the short term and cuts to services in the medium term.

During the current financial year the Authority has generated income as shown in the table below.

	£'000
Contribution from Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire FRSs to running costs of TVFCS	1,499
Capital contribution from TVP for space at Theale fire station	389
Cross border income	203
Mast income	79
Rental income from TVP at HQ	49
SCAS rental income	25
Rental income from 3 houses	11
Rental income from TVP at Hungerford	10
SANH income from Warwickshire and Northampton FRSs	10
Total	2,275

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Appendix A

Looking Forward

Whilst the £5 increase in the precept is welcome, it should be noted that the revenue investment in capital assets is contingent on projected pay awards being no more than 2.5% in 2022/23. Pay awards over 2.5% would reduce the revenue investment in capital and consequently have significant implications for the funding of Phase 2 of the SAIF.

Furthermore, pay awards from 2023/24 onwards are assumed to be 2%. Again, any pay awards over this amount would require adjustments elsewhere on the Revenue Budget and have knock on impacts on the ability to finance capital expenditure.

The worsening outlook for inflation means that it is possible that the £5 increase in precept could be required to pay for rising employment costs as well as cost pressures in relation to supplies and services. The extent of these rises and the level of Government funding in the medium term will determine the level of investment that the Authority can make in both its service provision as well as its asset base. Without this baseline level of investment, the Service will struggle to provide an efficient and effective service to the public.

Cllr Dennis Benneyworth, Budget and Income Generation Lead

Collaboration

Review

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

This year has continued to present challenges related to impact of Covid-19 however, the now well established use of more flexible and remote working options has ensured we have still been able make progress in key projects. The Breathing Apparatus (BA) project is on track and on budget to procure the same BA equipment across the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (TVFRS). This work is a key enabler on our journey towards seamless interoperability that will improve the effectiveness of our response to incidents, bringing benefit to the communities we serve. It will also realise efficiencies in the way we mobilise fire engines to incidents through an aligned approach to deploying our resources across county boundaries.

The TVFRS have been working closely with Thames Valley Police to provide a solution required to meet a significant change to the way Fire Investigation services, specifically those that are required to go through the Criminal Justice System, are accredited. The introduction of a new forensic science ISO standard in October 2023 will provide a focus on the quality and management of Fire Investigation, resulting in improved and assured reporting for criminal prosecutions for serious crimes involving arson. As with any ISO accreditation this is a substantial undertaking and a team from across the Thames Valley are working hard to deliver the solution.

These projects are developing new ways of providing benefit to our communities, however it is worth reflecting on how far we've come and the successes we have had that still provide ongoing benefits to the public. In my six month report I described the successful, and continuing procurement of joint fleet, equipment and

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Appendix B

PPE, which has now moved into a business as usual status. These activities have saved millions in public money and will continue to do so. We also have shared use of estates through projects such as the new fire station at Theale which was operational in September 2021. We also share a number of resources such as the Monitoring Officer and the Thames Valley Collaboration Programme Manager and finally, we continue to enjoy the success of Thames Valley Fire Control Service which provides world class call handling and emergency resource mobilisation across the Thames Valley.

Ongoing and looking forward

Both of the key initiatives described above are complex, multi-year projects that highlight how the emergency services in the Thames Valley are leading the way with regards to collaboration. Clearly we intend to continue on this path and in recent months I have been supporting Wayne, in his role as Chair of the Collaboration Executive board, to produce a business plan that will provide a shared vision and a coherent roadmap for continuing success over the next five years. Members of the steering group will be reviewing the plan in July this year.

In my next report I hope to be able to account for the successful introduction of the new BA sets into Royal Berkshire, due in November this year. Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire will come online in Q1 2023/24 and we will then be able to realise the full benefits of this ambitious project.

Collaboration will offer RBFA and RBFRS opportunities for continued improvements in efficiency and effectiveness but is, by its very nature, complex and at times uncertain. I will continue to work with elected members from the Thames Valley, through the steering group, to cultivate and nurture our shared vision in order to realise the potential benefits that collaboration can bring.

Cllr David Cannon, Collaboration Lead Member

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Review

I am grateful to have this opportunity to update the Fire Authority on the progress on Community Risk Management Planning, since my last update November 2021. It has been a busy time for the team and I am pleased to report on progress that has been made since November.

Up until the end of Quarter Three, 4,478 Safe and Well Visits have been completed for those with individual characteristics that make them at higher risk of death in the event of an accidental dwelling fire. This was above our target of 3,950 for the year to-date and reflects positive progress. Fire Safety audits at the end of Quarter Three totalled 727, just below the target of 750. Given the ongoing challenges created by the pandemic, I am pleased to report this positive progress against two CRMP commitments. In next year, we are proposing to further refine how we target those at highest risk through our Safe and Well activity, which is reflected in the proposed Corporate Measures for 2022/23 as set out in the Annual Plan, also being considered by Members at the April Fire Authority.

I am pleased to report that performance against our Response Standard remains above our target of responding to emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions. For the year to date, at the end of Quarter Three, we had achieved this response on 77.3% of occasions, which is exceptional given the challenges experienced as a result of increased sickness levels due to COVID-19, putting additional pressure on our wholtime availability in particular. Whilst performance for Quarter Four has not yet been reported as a whole, it is worth noting that our performance against the Response Standard did reduce to 72.7% in February, which is due to the pressures placed on the Service by storms experienced in that month, most notably Storm Eunice.

Our performance against our Response Standard is measured across Berkshire and analysis demonstrates that performance does vary. However, our risk analysis has demonstrated that there are challenges in the West of the County with travel times, and, with the exception of Newbury, all other stations are on-call, which our

Agenda Item 18

Appendix C

Response Strategy highlighted as an area requiring further attention. Whilst our original intention had been to trial a different approach in the West to improve average response times, due to impact of the pandemic, this work has been delayed. However, an officer task and finish group has been formed to look at how we use our combined Prevention, Protection and Response resources to improve performance in the West.

Fire Authority agreed in November to undertake a consultation on Automatic Fire Alarms, and the burden placed on our Services through unwanted fire signals. I am pleased that the 10 week consultation has now concluded and the results of that consultation are being presented to Fire Authority this evening for consideration.

Positive progress continues to be made on the development of our Risk Based Inspection Programme to ensure we are identifying and targeting our fire safety resources at the areas of highest risk, in line with our Protection Strategy. We have been trialling elements of the new inspection programme and are entering the final development stages of the first phase of this project.

In February, the second edition of the Built Environment progress report was issued and provides an update on the Service's progress against the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One recommendations and our protection activity within our High Rise Residential Building Project. The report, available on the Service's website, provides an excellent summary of how the Authority and Service has taken action and provides assurance to our communities that our response has been comprehensive.

A number of Strategic Asset projects form part of the Community Risk Management Plan. Further detail will be provided on these by the Lead Member for Strategic Assets. However, I'm pleased to note the positive progress of a number of key projects, critical to the management of local risk, including the arrival of the Aerial Ladder Platform, the 4x4 utility vehicles, new appliances, replacement of the Service's breathing apparatus and the impressive development of Theale Community Fire Station. In September, our crews began to serve the community from the new station, which marks a significant milestone in the delivery of our Community Risk Management Plan. The site was identified during a search to

optimise the locations of our fire stations, with the new station providing improved emergency response access to the M4 and A4 corridors.

We are continuing to actively shape and lead work at a national level through the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Community Risk Programme. This programme aims to provide fire and rescue services with a set of standardised tools which will enable consistent identification, assessment and mitigation strategies for community risk. Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive, is the Project Executive of the NFCC CRMP Guidance Project and continues to lead this national work which has included creating a Standard for fire and rescue services on CRMPs. I am pleased to report that a suite of national guidance has now been published on CRMPs under Nikki's leadership and will, of course, be followed in the development of the Berkshire CRMP. In June 2021, the CRMP Fire Standard was published and we have now completed a gap analysis against that Standard, the majority of which I am pleased to report we are fully compliant against, with work planned to address the small number of areas requiring further action.

Ongoing and looking forward

Our current CRMP is due to conclude in 2023, and work is underway to develop our new Plan. This is a significant undertaking and will be fundamental to setting the direction of travel for the Service over the next four years. Members will be briefed on the development of this Plan, which will ultimately be presented to Fire Authority and subject to public consultation.

Our officers completed an annual review of risk to capture any new and emerging risks as part of our CRMP and this, together with the CRMP commitments that have been made in the Prevention, Protection and Response Strategies, form the basis of our CRMP activity in the 2022/23 Annual Plan. This includes deliverables such as a review of our specialist water rescue capability and undertaking a risk based review of Safe and Well Visit provision, aligned to the development of our new CRMP. It is certainly a busy year ahead for CRMP!

Cllr Dexter Smith, Integrated Risk Management Lead Member

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Strategic Assets - 2021-22 Lead Member Annual Report

I am delighted to present my last Lead Member Annual Report. It plots the continuing improvement in the facilities and hardware not only for our Firefighters but all the support staff across the service. It has been my privilege to support all the initiatives and work put in across the departments and I wish you well with the continuing advances that will be needed in the years to come. Also your search for new funding, joint ventures and other new ways to enable essential progress.

Separately I am proud that you have found the means to support The Gambia last year with the old water bowser and are now in the midst of finding equipment and vehicles to support our friends in the Ukraine.

Review

Fleet, Facilities & Equipment

During 2021/22 the Fleet Strategy focused on a medium term plan which can be broken down into three main areas of focus; Red fleet, (fire appliances and special appliances), White fleet (all support and light vehicles) and Equipment. We have continued to improve the efficiency of our fleet and we now operate with a fleet of 116 vehicles compared to 145 vehicles in 2015 and down from 123 vehicles in 2018/19, with further rationalisation planned for the coming year.

Through our collaborative procurement with Thames Valley partners we have procured a single standardised Fire Appliance type for all three services. In November 2021, the final delivery of fire appliances from the initial collaborative contract became operational at Slough Fire Station. RBFRS have now taken delivery of 19 new Volvo fire appliances since 2017. This has enabled RFBRS to continue to dispose of their oldest vehicles and cascade newer vehicles to support other areas of the organisation such as training centre, on-call stations and fire cadets.

The RBFRS Fleet Strategy and the SAIF take account of replacement of specialist appliances and capabilities. The new 45M Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) became fully operational in August 2021. Procured in collaboration with Oxfordshire and

Agenda Item 18

Appendix D

Staffordshire FRS's, this has replaced our previous aerial appliance and has enabled improvements in height, manoeuvrability, reach and serviceability.

In addition to the new appliances and the new ALP, six 4x4 double cab utility vehicles became operational in April 2021. These vehicles primarily provide logistical support for on-call stations, support the delivery of water rescue and support the Service's four wheel drive resilience in periods of spate weather conditions.

With the continued support of the Fire Authority and in line with the SAIF, in February 2022 the Fire Authority approved the purchase of nine white fleet vehicles which will include electric and hybrid powered vehicles. White fleet renewals which were approved in 2021 have suffered production delays which has meant that the first two vehicles arrived in service in February 2022 with the other vehicles anticipated in autumn 2022. The orders for the 2022 approved vehicles will be placed once specifications are finalised. The electric and hybrid vehicles due to arrive in service represent the initial step in a transition towards a more environmentally friendly fleet, and shows intent for the future taking into account the current government directive that no new petrol or diesel vehicles will be sold from 2030 onwards.

A major piece of work commenced in 2021 to replace the Service's breathing apparatus. This has involved working in collaboration with our Thames Valley partners to develop a new specification in preparation for a collaborative procurement project to achieve aligned breathing apparatus across the Thames Valley. Extensive user trials took place last summer involving representatives from all three services. Following the user trials and tender evaluations, a contract was awarded to Interspiro Ltd for the supply of Breathing Apparatus equipment across the Thames Valley. Training on the new equipment is due to commence in the next couple of months, with RBFPS due to go live with the new equipment in November 2022.

Our Facilities team have been at the forefront of keeping our sites compliant and operational during the Covid-19 pandemic. As the restrictions started to ease over the past year, many good practices regarding cleaning and hand-sanitising have remained in place across our sites.

In addition, the facilities team have been leading on the decommissioning of Wargrave, Pangbourne and Dee Road Fire stations. This work has been in support

of the asset release programme following the build of Theale Fire Station. This has involved a coordinated approach to ensure stakeholder requirements and timescales were met in order to support a smooth transition towards closing down each site.

Ongoing and looking forward

Whilst great strides have been taken in transforming the front line appliance fleet, there still remains work to do around the wider special appliance provision and to further improving the white fleet. Upcoming CRMP work will support and inform our future procurement needs for special appliances and will also help inform the future fleet strategy which is due for renewal in 2023. This coming year will be an opportunity to develop the plans for the future fleet strategy which aims to create a sustainable rolling procurement plan to ensure that RBFRS have a fit for purpose fleet.

Over the coming year, the Facilities team will be aiming to continue to drive forward a highly customer focussed approach to support the wider organisation and to deliver its objectives within a safe and comfortable workplace. The team will be working closely with the Capital Projects team as part of the minor capital works refurbishment programme to ensure that the works result in improved working environments for our operational personnel.

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Property Capital Projects

Review

As reported to Members at Management Committee on 5th April 2022, the project to build a new wholetime tri-service community fire station at Theale was not only completed on time and on budget but also met the Authority's objectives of a high quality build that will stand the test of time. This high profile site continues on the Authority's vision to deliver a 'family' of buildings that are recognisable by the communities they serve.

Five years of work by the Capital Projects team have culminated in delivering this state of the art facility that the Fire Authority can be rightly proud of - the Authority's first brand new wholetime fire station in over 30 years (apart from the repositioned rebuild of Wokingham Fire Station in 2011). This completion of this project provides another meaningful advance in delivering the first phase of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF).

The station crews moved into their new location from Dee Road on Wednesday 29th September 2021 and were fully operational ahead of the target date of 1st October. It is pleasing to report that our blue light colleagues at both Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service are also now operating from this well located site.

Whilst this project was lead and managed by the Capital Projects team, it is right that we also recognise the work and assistance of every other department in the Service who all helped in the success of this project.

Clearly, the main focus of the capital projects team has been on completing the delivery of Theale, other areas of work have continued to progress well. The first project within the Minor Capital Works programme has seen the completion of the first package of works at Slough and we are currently out to tender for both the Bracknell and Maidenhead packages of work. In order to match available resources

within the Capital Projects team, the other packages of work within this programme will only commence once Bracknell and Maidenhead are complete.

The team are keenly aware that costs are rising in the construction sector way in excess of inflation which, coupled with post-Brexit supply chain issues, means experienced project management and efficient and attentive contract management will be key to attempting to deliver the entirety of the identified works within this programme to budget, to time and to quality.

The Asset Release programme is moving towards its conclusion following the successful completion of the sales of both Wargrave and Pangbourne. As reported to Members of Management Committee, it is anticipated that the sale of Dee Road will continue to progress positively, with completion expected by the end of May 2022.

Ongoing and looking forward

Whilst the project to deliver the new build at Theale is complete, we are within our 12 month defect rectification period which runs until the end of September this year. This will continue to require a keen focus from the team to ensure any issues are swiftly addressed and resolved.

As Members are aware, the official opening of Theale fire station had to be delayed due to Covid restrictions, but it is hoped to be able to confirm the date for this much anticipated event soon.

Over the coming weeks, the Minor Capital works projects at Bracknell and Maidenhead will move from tender phase into construction phase. Regular progress updates will continue to be provided to Members via the Property Development Working Group. Once these two projects are well progressed, work will commence on bringing the next two projects within this programme of work towards their tender phase and on to construction.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Review

Progress continues on several fronts across the ICT landscape, with perhaps the highlight being the implementation and migration to Microsoft Teams as the first major Microsoft 365 rollout carried out within RBFRS, and substantial progress in migrating to Microsoft cloud email (exchange online), all with minimal disruption to the organisation. Teams replaced Cisco Webex as the remote meeting tool during 2021/22, and has introduced additional productivity features such as better integration with email Calendar, the establishment of an ad-hoc audio/video calling capability, chat based instant messaging, and document and content sharing. User groups are beginning to use these capabilities to introduce automation and more efficient group collaboration spaces. This deployment also brings us in line with our Thames Valley partner FRSSs, who are established Microsoft 365 users.

Progress has been made in our Network refresh programme, with purchase orders being placed for a comprehensive refresh of wide area, local area and wireless networks, following Management committee approval of the contract earlier in the year. The project has been impacted by global hardware supply issues, but ICT continue to work with vendors to expedite implementation in the coming months. The refresh is essential in providing a more resilient and higher capacity network as more services and functions move to the cloud over time.

During the first half of the year, RBFRS successfully recruited Cath Dukes into the vacant Information Governance Manager role. Cath brings significant experience in information security ICT leadership to the BIS organisation and is being tasked with driving forward improvements in RBFRSSs information and knowledge management systems and processes.

The service underwent a full IT Health check during the summer by an independent accredited ICT Security consultancy, which resulted in a very detailed report containing a number of recommendations for action. This is to be expected as the nature of the Cyber Security landscape is constantly changing. Officers within ICT

are currently working through the action plan with a view to completing the implementation of any high priority actions by the end of the municipal year.

To support increased use of hybrid meetings in a post pandemic workplace, RBFRS is using government grant funding to equip all meeting spaces across the estate with integrated audio and camera equipment that will allow a better meeting experience for both local and remote attendees, and quicker and easier meeting room set up. Purchase orders for equipment and installation and deployment have been raised and due to global hardware supply issues implementation is now expected in Q2 2022/23.

Ongoing and looking forward

As well as starting the network refresh implementation, and deploying enhanced hybrid meeting technology, the focus over the next year will be on expansion in use of other elements of the Microsoft 365 suite of services, including onedrive (personal cloud storage for employees), exchange online (cloud based email infrastructure), sharepoint (shared group collaboration spaces, and workflow automation tools). Taking the step-by-step approach will help avoid major disruption to the organisation as far as possible and ensure a smooth transition to a more collaborative set of software tools.

In addition, we expect to complete the procurement and deployment of new ESN compliant Mobile Data Terminals, Fireground radios, and Station end mobilising equipment to all vehicles and stations during the coming year, as well as expanding deployment of mobile devices to allow more staff greater flexibility in accessing key applications and services.

Cllr Angus Ross, Strategic Asset Lead Member

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Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to demand capacity of the both the Health and Safety and Health and Wellbeing teams in 2021/22 in order to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff in all roles.

Internal guidance and risk assessments were updated as national restrictions were eased and re-imposed during the course of 2021. The emergence of the Omicron variant at the end of the year required ways of working to be reviewed again and additional restrictions to be imposed.

As more was learnt about the potential effects of COVID-19 a return to work fitness test was introduced for operational personnel. The test was developed in conjunction with Occupational Health, to provide reassurance around fitness for work to the individual and managers. Returning to strenuous physical activity to soon after COVID-19 could be a health risk in the presence of underlying medical conditions. The testing regime has identified several individuals that required additional recovery time.

Throughout the pandemic staff were encouraged to access trusted sources of information in relation to vaccination and to be wary of dis-information. Winter vaccine messaging was promoted as well as highlighting changes to COVID-19 vaccine eligibility.

For a second year, all staff were offered a flu vaccination voucher. The aim was to relieve the pressure on the NHS and at an organisational level reduce sickness absence to avoid pressures on crewing. 148 vouchers were requested and additional staff would have been eligible for a free NHS vaccination.

Throughout the pandemic staff have been reminded of all of the sources of support available to them. Usage data from the employee assistance programme has been monitored throughout and trends addressed with additional health promotion activity. A high volume of mental health calls has been observed in particular depression, low mood and anxiety.

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Attention must now turn to mitigating the long-term effects of the pandemic on staff wellbeing and ensuring supports are sufficient to meet changing needs.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been revised for 2022 – 2025, it has become the Health, Safety and Wellbeing strategy. For the first time the strategy includes Health and Safety to reflect the shared aims and joint delivery in this area. The three core aims of our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy are safe and healthy people, safe and healthy places, and safe and healthy processes.

Health Safety and Wellbeing performance continues to be monitored at Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee, which meets four times per year. Any injuries that are required to be reported to HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR*), are also monitored by our Strategic Performance Board, which also meets quarterly. All safety events are investigated and measures taken to address any recommendations for improvement. Trend analysis is also undertaken.

The sickness working group continue to monitor absence data and identify trends that can be addressed through various avenues such as training, health promotion or policy revisions. The group also analyses external information on workplace health and initiatives from other FRS to identify best practice.

A number of considerations and initiatives continue in the health and fitness area in an attempt to reduce sickness absence and improve health and fitness some highlights include:

- ✓ The Benenden Matron on Blue delivered a series of webinars in Q4 Monday, Time to Talk Day and World Sleep Day.
- ✓ Purchase of Drinkaware's Alcohol Awareness e-learning package. The need for training in area was identified through a self-assessment against the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework.

- ✓ Communications campaigns have included Men's Health Week, World Alzheimer's Month, World Menopause Day, Movember and Talk Money Week.

Routine fitness testing takes place in April and October each year. In April 2021, the pass rate was 98.2% and in October 2021, a pass rate of 98.4% was achieved. Anyone not achieving the required standard is supported to improve their fitness, ensuring that the individual is signposted as necessary.

The Benenden Employee Healthcare scheme has been in place for five years. 459 employees are currently members of the scheme, which provides quick access to diagnostic services, treatment and physiotherapy when the waiting list on the NHS is too long. Physiotherapy is the most well used service offered by Benenden, between January and December 2021, 29 employees accessed physiotherapy through the scheme.

Health Partners have been delivering Occupational Health for RBFRS since March 2017. Reflective of the effective working relationships that have been established, the Service has awarded them a contract for a further four years, commencing 1 March 2022. Throughout the duration of the contract, both parties will continue to identify areas for improvement.

The Employee Assistance Programme delivered by Health Assured provide information and advice through a number of routes; telephone, online health portal, mobile phone app and employee newsletter. This contract has also been renewed for a further 12 months. A tender process will be undertaken in the coming year to identify a potential new provider. This will consider whether there are more innovative ways we can support our staff, across a range of issues in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The HR Case Officer promotes all of the supports available to managers and ensures that they are being used effectively to manage sickness absence.

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Manager guides along with Core Skills training continue to be available to empower managers to reduce sickness absence in their areas.

Mental health continues to be an area of focus for the Service and implementation of the mental health action plan is well underway. Achievements to note are:

- ✓ Initial Mental Health First Aid training and refresher training for existing Mental Health First Aiders.
- ✓ Support for national awareness campaigns throughout the year including Mental Health Awareness Week, International Suicide Prevention Day, World Mental Health Day and Time to Talk Day. Each of these highlights a different aspect of mental health and signposts to appropriate sources of support, available through RBFRS and also externally.
- ✓ Work continues to highlight the associations between protected characteristics and the impact on wellbeing for example Carers Week, LGBTQ+ History Month.

There are over 50 Blue Light Champions across the Service, with more station-based personnel volunteering.

Continued support and advice on health and safety matters is given to managers on a broad range of issues, for example, risk assessment completion, workplace issues, accident investigation and health and safety training requirements. Particular areas of focus have been Covid and National Operational Guidance risk assessments. Health and safety policies and procedures are routinely reviewed, and also in response to updated guidance or learning from internal and external sources.

RBFRS continue to take an active role in the NFCC South East Health and Safety Group and the Fire and Rescue Risk Group under the auspices of FRIC.

The Contaminants Working Group, established in 2020 to respond to the independent report 'minimising firefighter exposure to toxic fire effluents – interim

best practice', completed by the University of Central Lancashire, commissioned by the Fire Brigade's Union, continues to make good progress in this area. A training package has been produced and made available to staff on our Learning Management System. The training highlights what contamination is, and what it can do to you and those around you. This training is being further developed and will include specific actions that staff should follow to prevent exposure. Traffic light posters have been produced and are being trialled at Theale and Bracknell Fire Stations, highlighting areas where fire kit can and can't be worn. The next step will be to develop guidance for staff, contractors and visitors on what the posters mean. Additional work wear is being procured so that staff have sufficient clean clothing to change in to, as well as standby bags for crews to transport their kit to other stations. External storage bins for contaminated kit are also being trialled at Bracknell Fire Station. In addition, for lightly contaminated kit, we are sourcing a waterproof outside shelter, which will be trialled at the Training Centre.

In this past year, we signed a three year contract with People Safe, to provide our higher risk lone workers such as those who are public facing, or remote, such as Safe and Well Technicians, with equipment which enables them to call for urgent assistance should they need it.

To ensure the safety of our buildings, workplace inspections, which include a review of the site fire risk assessment, continue to be undertaken by Workplace Managers in April and October. We work with our colleagues in the Facilities Team on the findings of these. Throughout the past year, a monthly audit of Covid measures at each of our workplaces has taken place. This was discontinued in March, as we have relaxed some of our Covid measures in line with Government guidance.

In the past year, a number of health and safety courses have been delivered. Three IOSH Managing Safely courses and four refresher courses. Our contract with our training provider, St John's Ambulance has been extended for a further year. These courses are attended by all grey and green book line managers. We have also delivered three Emergency First Aid at Work Courses and one First Aid at Work Course, to ensure that we can continue to be able to provide first aid assistance to

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staff in the workplace when needed. An accident investigation course is being delivered at the end of March.

New starters have been provided with essential health and safety information as part of their induction to the service.

We continue to support the musculoskeletal health and safety of all our office based new starters through our on-line risk assessment and training software. A specific module for working at home has also been distributed, for those who worked at home during the pandemic, and those who continue to work in a hybrid way.

Of particular note this year is Helen Morbin, Fitness and Health Advisor, received the Asian Fire Service Association award for 'Addressing Health Inequalities in the Community' for her work during the pandemic, in particular her work to investigate and take action regarding the emerging evidence of differential health outcomes for individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Becci Jefferies Head of HR and Learning and Development, has been awarded a British Empire Medal for her work to transform health and wellbeing services for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

*RIDDOR injuries are those that have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive due to their more serious nature or because the injured party was not able to carry out their normal work for more than 7 days.

Community Safety

Year Review

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's mission is to serve the people of Royal Berkshire. To support this, through its Corporate Plan, the Authority has made three strategic commitments to the people of Berkshire relating to Community Safety:

- We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area. Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 fire and rescue authorities must enforce the provisions of that Order and any regulations made under it in relation to premises for which it is the enforcing authority. This report will provide an overview of community safety activity undertaken by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) in 2021/22.

Prevention

We will reduce the number of vulnerable people dying due to accidental fires in the home by targeting those at greatest risk:

Safe and Well visits include the targeted delivery of appropriate home fire safety advice and information, assessment for provision of appropriate fire safety equipment. We identify and discuss wider health and wellbeing issues and

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signposting to partner agencies, where appropriate. Visits targeted at individuals at greatest risk are called 'Risk to Individuals' Safe and Well visits.

RBFRS receives high quality referrals from partner agencies such as South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police. We recognise that these referrals are rich in information and will signpost us directly to the most vulnerable people living in Berkshire. As such, we continue to train staff from other agencies, widening the reach of our Adults at Risk Programme. Whilst restrictions necessitated by COVID 19 reduced the number of partner agencies able to receive this training at the start of the year training sessions have now resumed.

Due to the restrictions necessarily imposed in response to the COVID 19 Pandemic a significant number of Safe and Well referrals were placed on a waiting list during 2020/21. Teams have prioritised those people who have been identified to be at the highest risk when delivering Safe and Well visits throughout this period. Waiting lists have now returned to normal levels with new referrals actively being sought. Safety visits for people identified as being at risk due to the threat of arson have also continued throughout this period.

We will reduce the volume of fires occurring in homes and the injuries that result from them by targeting only those most at risk:

Applying local knowledge, working with partners and utilising the MOSAIC database, Crews identify and target visits to this risk group. These visits are called 'Risk to Households' Safe and Well visits. During the first half of the year RBFRS prioritised the 'Risk to Individuals' waiting list described above and so did not complete the expected volume of Safe and Well visits planned for this lower risk group.

A new Quality Assurance process has been developed and a trial is being implemented across the Service in order to provide assurance of the standard of delivery and recording of all types of Safe and Well visits. The outcomes from this process will be used to continuously develop and improve our delivery of service to the most vulnerable members of the community.

Working with our partners we aim to reduce road deaths and injuries by 20% in Royal Berkshire over the next five years:

Our Fire Safety Education Team support our operational crews to deliver road safety lessons to year 7 pupils across Berkshire. In addition, RBFRS supports the Safe Drive Stay Alive (SDSA) scheme - this is a multi-agency initiative for key stage 5, year 12 and 13 students. RBFRS also deliver Biker Down education across the Thames Valley in partnership with other agencies.

Despite the impact of COVID 19 our teams continued to target the reduction of road deaths during this period. Activities included static displays and the posting of road safety posters in known accident blackspots across the county. Several Biker Down education events have also taken place and continue to be well attended.

We will align to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016–26, with the stated aim of a reduction in the number of drowning incidents by 50% by 2026:

To help to achieve this, we undertake fire safety education in schools delivering water safety lessons to year 7 pupils across Berkshire. Additionally, through the Local Safety Plans, crews undertake targeted activity to make interventions and educate people on the dangers associated with open water swimming.

Our teams have continued to engage with school leaders by signposting alternative and preferred methods of delivery via the provision of multimedia packages enabling the remote delivery of safety messages to young people across Berkshire.

Our Hubs have also actively engaged with partner agencies across the area in order to work collaboratively to prevent drowning in known high risk areas and provide information and education to local communities.

Protection

We will focus our audits in the places people are most at risk and where fire safety standards are not being met:

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We continue to review our risk-based inspection methodology in order to further refine the targeting of our regulatory activity in the areas of greatest risk. The continued improvement in focus on non-compliant premises is evidenced by through Service performance reporting mechanisms.

Protection teams have continued to provide advice and guidance to business as well as performing targeted regulation throughout the period.

A key focus of Protection activity through this period has continued to be the ongoing inspection and management of High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) across the County. Despite the impact of COVID 19 the HRRB project completed the inspection of all HRRBs in Berkshire in June. The team are now delivering Phase 2 of the Project and are actively managing the HRRBs identified to have fire safety concerns to achieve a safe and proportionate remediation.

We will consider the impact of major infrastructure projects and developments planned in Royal Berkshire so we are able to meet the additional demands placed on our service:

The Service have continued our programme of planning and activity in relation to the built environment. This programmatic approach enables us to remain agile to managing legislative changes and also developments within Berkshire. The local Hub model enables RBFRS to better plan and focus activities and resources through the individual Local Safety Plans developed within each Unitary Authority area.

Ongoing and looking forward

Prevention

In 2019, Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services found that RBFRS is good at preventing fires and other risks. In order to maintain or improve on a good service, and in line with our IRMP RBFRS intend to refine our Prevention Strategy with the following areas of focus:

- Introducing a risk-based programme of follow-up Safe and Well Visits for the most vulnerable cases;
- Within our Road Safety Programme include targeted activity for motorcyclists based on risk;
- Focus our activities in support of Children and Young People through our road fire and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and Fire Safe.

Delivery of the above will predominantly be through our Hub model, as detailed in the individual Local Safety Plan for each Unitary Authority. Whilst we are confident of the effectiveness of our prevention activity, it was highlighted in the HMICFRS report, that there are potential improvements to be made in how we evaluate and quality assure. As such, work is underway to further strengthen these areas.

COVID 19 may continue to present some challenges to the Service, but it is hoped that our ability to engage more fully with vulnerable communities will continue to be greatly improved. The teams will continue to look at innovative and pragmatic ways in which we can deliver against our commitments and the targets within our Local Safety Plans.

Protection

In 2019, Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services found that RBFRS is good at protecting the public through fire regulation. In order to maintain or improve on a good service, and in line with our IRMP, RBFRS continue to refine our Protection Strategy with the following areas of focus:

- Developing our Risk Based Inspection methodology to better target the highest risk premises.

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- Continue to respond to changes in legislation and guidance related to building regulation and fire safety and ensure this is reflected in our policies, processes and ways of working.
- Continue to design and implement Development Assessment Pathways in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators.

In recognition of the challenges relating to Protection, the Authority have shown the foresight to make a significant investment in resource since the Grenfell tragedy. This continues to support our ability to plan for and respond to legislative changes during Phase 2 of the HRRB Project. RBFPS continues to deliver regulatory activity under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Audit across the built environment in line with the Regulator's Code.

Cllr Christine Bateson, Health Safety and Wellbeing and Community Safety Champion

Organisational Development Member Champion Report 2021/22

Review of the Year

This year has been an exceptionally busy year from recruitment especially for operational roles with recruitment and selection process run for every operation role from Firefighter to Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The new Chief Fire Office was recruited at the end of March 2021 and joined the Service in June 2021 we then recruited to three other positions across the Senior Leadership Team. We restructured directorates to realign responsibilities creating a new role of Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services, maintaining three directors in total but losing the role of Director of Support Services.

This year we changed our approach to Wholetime Firefighter recruitment to use an apprenticeship model. This method build on the work developed across the sector and allows us to access funding from the national apprentice levy which reduces the overall costs to the Service. The move to the apprenticeship model also instigated a review of our Firefighter development pathway to ensure it aligned with the course provider. While this created additional work in the short term it does means going forward our ways of working are now aligned and it will improve efficiency for future intakes.

We commissioned a review of our promotion process for operational staff which included a number of staff engagement sessions to ensure we took on board feedback including how processes could be improved. The result is a revised approach which also support succession planning, by providing input for applicants ahead of recruitment. This change in approach will provide an excellent building block to help us manage talent in the future.

This year saw the formal launch of the Code of Ethics Fire Standard. This standard seeks to drive a consistent set of behaviours and values for all English Fire and Rescue Services. The core values of, Putting our Communities First, Integrity, Dignity and Respect, Leadership and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion resonated well with the existing RBFRS Employee Code of Conduct. We have been able to fully adopt the Code of Ethics by embedding it within our Employee Code of Conduct and

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Behavioural Competency Framework. It has also been reference as part of the Fire Authority Member Code of Conduct refresh to support that one team approach which continues to go from strength to strength.

This year has also seen the return of face to face Leadership Forums which brings together senior and middle managers in a single to space to share learning and work on service wide challenges. The focus for the first session was Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and included an excellent presentation from Hayley Brackley on neurodiversity. Hayley was a particularly relevant and engaging speaker as she had been a Control Room Firefighter in another Fire and Rescue Service. Hayley provided fantastic insight into working in our sector from a neurodivergent perspective which will help the leadership cadre identify and support team members who may share that perspective.

As we started to carry out more face to face meetings we instigated a number of staff engagement sessions to shape and inform the three new core strategic documents, People Strategy, the Communications and Engagement Strategy and the Consultation Strategy. This has presented a great opportunity to reconnect staff after the national lock down. Directly after these team and watch sessions we launched our latest full staff survey at the time of writing this report we are still analysing the results but the intention is to incorporate these finding into these three revised corporate documents.

We want to strengthen our approach to Talent Management and intend to fully adopt the National Fire Chiefs Council's Talent Management toolkit when it's launched later in 2022. To help support this we have create a Coaching and Mentoring Strategy to act as a key enabler to support implementation of the toolkit. The strategy has been agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and we have already started to introduce a number of the recommendations. We will look to fully implement the strategy over the next 12 months.

This year has seen number of significant changes to the firefighter pension scheme and the guidance is often ambiguous and difficulty to navigate. The Service has worked hard to support to staff wishing to retire and the Authority have taken a pragmatic, 'people first' approach to decision making, but it is important to note that

this remains a significant challenge for the Service and is consuming a significant amount of resource to manage.

The Member Development offer has again been reviewed and enhanced this year. In response to feedback received in the last Member Development survey, a review was held on the Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing course, and it was developed to include unconscious bias training, as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) module. We have also responded to Members feedback from the survey on scheduling both face-to-face and online courses throughout 2021/22. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, all but one course and fire station visits were held in person. However, we remain committed to this hybrid approach moving forward.

A revised Performance Development Review (PDR) policy was issued in October 2021 which included further information and examples on setting SMART and behavioural objectives with two deadline dates for completion – one for completing the PDR interviews (30 June) and one for returning the endorsed paperwork to HR (31 July). This revised approach will ensure that staff are receiving the completed and endorsed paperwork in a timely fashion, which will enable them to understand and deliver their objectives. In line with the policy revision, training for managers has been revised, with more emphasis on setting objectives and a revised section on the Behavioural Competency Framework.

Ongoing and looking forward

The revised the People Strategy is currently in draft will be consulted on in quarter one 2022/23. This revised strategy will builds on the work on the current 2018-22 strategy but will also adopt the learning we have gained by working differently through the Covid pandemic.

A key theme going forward for organisational development is the Technology Road map. We have created a Technology Road Map to help us make better use technology enhancements in systems and hardware that can improve ways of working. This will continue for the next three years and become a key enabler for the new people strategy.

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Three other plans/strategies will be revised over the coming year, the communications and engagement strategy, the consultation strategy and the member development strategy. While this will be demanding, it is necessary as we move in the next cycle of Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) we need to make sure that these key people focussed documents and plans support delivery of effective and efficient services to the community.

Cllr Pauline Helliar-Symons, Organisational Development Champion

Armed Forces Member Champion Report 2021/22

Introduction

I am pleased to be able to present this report as the Armed Forces Member Champion for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. In February 2018, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) signed the Armed Forces Covenant, to formally pledge its support to members of the Armed Forces community. The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) is a pledge that we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy, and society they serve with their lives.

Work has continued in 2021/2022 to demonstrate our commitment to our Armed Forces community, supported by our Armed Forces Service Liaison Officer, Station Manager, Che Scott. Progress and activities are outlined below.

Review of the Year

Royal County of Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership Board

I am pleased to have represented Royal Berkshire Fire Authority at the first meeting of the Royal County of Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership Board in June 2021. This Partnership has been established to build on the individual working relationships between the six unitary authorities, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, civilian agencies and the military community in Berkshire.

Work is underway to finalised the terms of reference of the Partnership and agree an action plan to be delivered over the coming years in support of the Armed Forces community in Berkshire. The core membership of the Board will include the Armed Forces Champions for the six unitaries and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. An officer group supports the Partnership Board and in 2021/22 the Service was represented by the Head of Corporate Services.

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Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs

As part of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's commitment to supporting members of the Armed Forces community, I am proud that we have been able to host an Armed Forces Veterans' Hub, which was launched on 7 November 2020. The Armed Forces Veterans' Hub has been designed to offer a place for veterans to come together, listen to speakers and meet organisations who can provide them with advice or support them and meet each other. In the last year, three hub have been organised by officers. The second meeting was held virtually in February 2021, and the first in-person ones took place in December 2021 and March 2022.

Attendance at Forces Employment Charity Event

Station Manager, Ché Scott, discussed the opportunities available for those who are leaving the Armed Forces in a wide range of roles within Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service with RFEA - The Forces Employment Charity. Over 775 people viewed this session online.

Armed Forces Week

Armed Forces Week was supported across the Service and Fire Authority in June 2021. Officers posted content online every day for the week to show our ongoing support and commitment to the Armed Forces community.

Commemorative Events

The Service and Fire Authority Members attended a number of commemorate local events throughout the year in remembrance of the sacrifice by HM Armed Forces personnel past and present who have made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our safety and security.

Attendance at HM Naval Base – Portsmouth

We are the proud recipient of the Gold Award from the Government's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) in recognition of its commitment to support the Armed Forces and align its values with the Armed Forces Covenant. Along with a select number of other ERS Gold Award holders, RBFRS received an invitation from South

East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (SERFCA) to spend a day at HM Naval Base Portsmouth. This was in recognition of the significant contribution of the organisations invited and their continued support and recognition of the vital contribution that members of HM Armed Forces have and continue to make to the security of the UK and support of NATO.

Looking Ahead

In 2022, RBFRS will continue to demonstrate its advocacy of the Armed Forces Covenant and support for HM Armed Forces and its veterans. This will be achieved by initiating and continuing the following workstreams:

Insight Days with the Career Transition Partnership

RBFRS Insight days were a first in the UK. They were a collaborative and innovative way in which the blue light services could show their support for the Armed Forces and the work that Career Transition Partnership undertakes to prepare all service leavers ready for reintegration into the civilian world.

During 2022, officers intend to host a tri-service insight day, in collaboration with the Career Transition Partnership, to highlight the roles within the fire and rescue service, alongside other blue light partners.

Armed Forces Veterans' Board

To support the ongoing work, officers will form the first internal Armed Forces Board, which will comprise people from within the Service, together with the Armed forces Member Champion, that will coordinate and support all Armed Forces workstreams throughout the year.

Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs

Following the successful launch and ongoing Armed Forces Veterans' Hub meetings, we will continue to host these meetings across the County. In 2022/23, we hope to increase the number of Hub meetings up to a minimum of three a year,

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offering a space for our veterans to come together and hear from a variety of speakers and useful organisations and charities.

Blue Light Forum Meetings

Since 2019, the Service has been invited to the first-ever Blue Light Forum hosted by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Greater London (GL RFCA) to establish a military / blue light network in the South of England. This network enables organisations to:

- Support each other through the sharing of experience and good practices;
- Add value to the Defence Partnership and each other; and
- Learn about how they can be rewarded through the MOD's Employer Recognition Scheme.

During 2022/23, officers will continue to attend these Blue Light Forum meetings to build on and continue to develop relationships with colleagues.

Commemorative Events

We will ensure that the Service and Authority commemorates key dates throughout the year that remember the sacrifice by HM Armed Forces personnel, past and present, who have made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our safety and security. This will also once again include supporting Armed Forces Week in June 2022.

Civil-Military Partnership

Together with Station Manager, Che Scott, we have represented the Service and Authority at numerous events held on various occasions over the lifetime of our journey for Gold.

The South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (SERFCA) aims to provide enduring, efficient, and practical support to the Reserve Forces and Cadets through recruiting, employer and infrastructure support, and fostering and developing links with the Community.

We fully support this and have supported units of both reserves and their full-time colleagues with bespoke training events, enabling us to build a good working relationship, innovatively and collaboratively.

This work on Civil-Military Partnership (CMP) will continue in 2022/23.

Royal County of Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership Board

An event is planned for 2022 to launch the Royal County of Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership Board. The Armed Forces Member Champion will be invited to represent the Authority on the Board over the coming year.

Councillor Angus Ross , Armed Forces Honorary Member Champion

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Member Champion Report 2021/22

Work has continued across the Service in 2021/2022 to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, in conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing teams and through collaborative efforts with staff in all areas of the organisation.

Progress and activities are outlined below. These are organised by reference to the RBFRS equality objectives, which are currently undergoing revision and subsequent consultation.

Objective 1: Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels - We will take actions to increase the diversity of job applicants to help us reflect the community by focusing particularly on under-represented groups.

In line with the gradual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, the Service facilitated in-person attendance at Reading Pride in September 2021. A questionnaire was shared with attendees to understand community views regarding the Service, career opportunities at RBFRS and potential barriers to engagement.

The delivery of positive action events such as Have A Go days have been reviewed to consider the expansion of the content in line with learnings from previous events and analysis of past recruitment processes. These events have also been targeted at areas of the County where there is a greater proportion of under-represented ethnic groups, in addition to maintaining a focus on targeting events at women across the County.

To support the restarting of further in-person events including schools visits, available careers information and resources were reviewed and updated to support stations in facilitating visits, giving an overview of available opportunities and equality matters to be considered when conducting engagement or visits with these groups. Schools visits that have been conducted have included the promotion of the forthcoming Chairman's Internship, as well as ongoing opportunities such as Fire Cadets and new Have A Go events.

The work towards this objective is also indirectly supported by other activities outlined below, including use of membership resources and the promotion of inclusion-related accreditations which the Service has achieved.

Objective 2: Leadership and corporate commitment - This objective aligns with the NFCC Framework which centres on leadership, partnership and commitment.

Leadership and corporate commitment means we will be strong and visible in our leadership and that all employees have confidence in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

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A number of new policies have been created to further support the creation of an inclusive culture at RBFRS. A domestic abuse policy has been created following the existing guidance documents available to staff. The Modern Slavery policy has been reviewed, alongside further development and review of the Trans Equality policy in line with best practice. The work wear policy has also incorporated equality considerations to create a more inclusive policy, using gender-neutral language for different uniform options.

Reporting has also continued, with a Gender Pay Gap report produced as in previous years. A new Ethnicity Pay Gap analysis and report have also been completed.

RBFRS premises and related works have been assessed for inclusivity and adjustments made. Following research and consultation, more inclusive and informative signage has been designed for accessible bathrooms at RBFRS sites, and work is underway to implement this recommendation. Capital Projects have completed impact assessments for new works to ensure that premises are inclusive and accessible to staff and the local community, for example the new Theale Community Fire Station has braille on signage, a range of accessible bathroom facilities, gender-neutral facilities and a hearing loop system, as well as signage that is sensitive to hidden disabilities.

RBFRS has received a number of awards and accreditations in this period. Predominantly, the Service achieved the highest level award in the Disability Confident Scheme (Level 3 – Leader award) following an extensive application process and assessment of a significant evidence submission. RBFRS staff have also been recognised for their efforts in supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. Helen Morbin, Wellbeing Manager, received the national AFSA award for ‘Addressing Health Inequalities in the Community’ for her work during the pandemic. Will Johnson, Data Entry and Analysis Officer, and Kuldeep Kuner, DAPs Protection Co-ordinator, were both nominated for AFSA awards, and achieved Runner Up and Award Winner in the RBFRS Awards Ceremony EDI Champion category in addition to this.

Collaboration and partnership work have also been critical to the progress of the EDI agenda over this period. Memberships with Stonewall and the Business Disability Forum have been maintained, whilst a new membership with Inclusive Employers has been gained to provide further support and resources to ensure our activities and services are inclusive for all. Learning opportunities and access to learning resources have been promoted to staff through these memberships.

RBFRS has continued to participate in the Five Shires Collaboration, and maintained representation on a number of sector and regional networks including the Thames Valley LGBTQIA+ FRS group, Thames Valley LGBTQ+ Employers Network and AFSA South Local

Forum. Further one-off opportunities for collaboration have also been undertaken, including a CEO Connection Event with partners from Wiltshire Police and Portsmouth Hospitals Trust.

Objective 3: Improving our service delivery by knowing the communities we serve through a partnership and risk-based approach

This objective will focus on promoting equality by knowing our diverse communities and understanding their needs, ensuring that our prevention, protection and response activities target the most vulnerable people with the greatest risk.

Colleagues across the Service have engaged with members of the community in a number of forums to promote the activities and services we provide. A team have worked to provide tailored fire safety advice to Afghan refugees, promoting awareness in a culturally informed and sensitive approach.

Local safety plans have been designed to incorporate equality considerations whilst continuing to identify risk at a local level and target prevention and protection activity appropriately. This has included an increasing awareness of individuals and groups in the community who are less likely to engage with our services and activities.

Objective 4: Promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion - We will continue to take action to ensure we have a culture where everyone feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect by creating an inclusive working environment that will enable us to maximise the potential of a diverse workforce.

Multifarious learning and development activities have been undertaken to support the creation of an inclusive environment and staff understanding and awareness of EDI. The induction programme has been revised to include standard EDI content. E-Learning packages have been developed and published, focusing on essential knowledge, EDI for Leaders and Equality Impact Assessments. This has supported ongoing face-to-face EDI training which has been delivered online during periods of restrictions relating to COVID-19. Members have attended Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing training, receiving input on health, wellbeing and EDI activities across the Service.

This has been supplemented by specialist one-off events open to all staff, including a webinar on Racial Inequality delivered by the Five Shires Collaboration and a talk by RAF Tornado pilot Mandy for International Women's Day. The latter was part of a week of events in collaboration with several other fire and rescue services. In addition, training has been provided to upskill staff on specific topics where needed, including sessions on Equality Impact Assessments delivered to the Built Environment Programme teams, for example.

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Various staff also attended learning events to increase their awareness and understanding of specific EDI topics. The Senior Leadership Team attended a leadership empowerment workshop with Stonewall to develop their role as champions of equality, diversity and inclusion. Members of the HR team have attended webinars on inclusive recruitment and neurodiversity. Representatives from Communications and Engagement, IT and Information Governance also attended training on accessibility delivered by the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

The Middle Manager Leadership Forums held in November focused on related topics, including a presentation on neurodiversity and sought to examine how we can advance Equality of Access work across the Service. As a result of feedback from participants, contact has been made with a Nigerian community group.

Communications to support staff awareness and understanding have been expanded. Monthly EDI articles are included in the Shout, including two articles with members of SLT to promote inclusive leadership. Members of SLT also hosted an LGBT+ History Month tea and coffee break event for staff, providing space to discuss LGBTQ+ inclusion and experience.

A bi-annual communications calendar has been produced. This recognises numerous diversity events, religious festivals and awareness dates. Alongside this, fifteen guidance documents have been produced to support staff with information relating to religious events such as Ramadan, Diwali and Passover, as well as line manager guidance to facilitate better support for staff who were fasting during Ramadan. A recipe series was commenced as part of celebrations and recognition for Black History Month, enabling staff to share recipes from individual cultures and backgrounds, which was extended into a Winter series over the festive period. A number of podcasts have also been produced to provide an alternative forum for awareness-raising, including podcasts on LGBT+ History Month/Pride and neurodiversity.

Members of RBFRS staff delivered a webinar for the Change100 programme development series, engaging interns on the scheme and sharing information about RBFRS careers and opportunities.

Staff continue to engage in networks and groups as part of equality, diversity and inclusion activities. The EDI Forum meets on a quarterly basis, actively supported by our Member Champion, Councillor Tina Mckenzie-Boyle, with other councillors also in attendance. Membership of the forum has increased, and this year has also seen individuals supported to attend conferences and events including the Autism at Work Summit, Neurodiversity at Work Conference and AFSA Conference. Attendees have subsequently shared learning and

reflections at the forum meetings, taking actions forward such as a review of recruitment processes to be more accessible and inclusive with regard to neurodiversity.

The EDI Steering Group has also been formed, with the first meeting scheduled for 31 March 2022.

The staff Disability Awareness Network has held a series of monthly coffee mornings, with a view that a similar support group may be established by staff specifically concerning neurodiversity. The Disability Awareness Network has hosted talks from Benenden and members of staff on specific topics, including lived experience of disabilities and long-term health conditions.

All groups are regularly used as consultative bodies to ensure that we are cognisant of staff voice and a range of views in order to inform and shape action undertaken by the Service.

Looking Ahead

Moving forward, in 2022 the Service will launch the Chairman's Internship Scheme, opening up a new pathway into the organisation for young people in Berkshire who are from ethnic groups that are currently under-represented in RBFRS. Similarly, a review of the Fire Cadet scheme will be commenced to extend inclusivity with regard to the programme and ensure equality of access. More widely, we will continue to review the inclusiveness of our recruitment processes to ensure that we are attracting a diverse applicant pool and supporting all candidates to participate fully in relevant processes.

The Service will also continue to engage with partners including the Five Shires Collaboration to support the delivery of this work, particularly with regard to establishing informative measures for benchmarking.

We will continue to deliver activities in line with the EDI Action Plan, following the agreement of new equality objectives and subsequent revision of the plan in line with these objectives.

Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Honorary Champion

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ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	30.06.22	Annual	Note	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2021/22	Fire Authority	30.06.22	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
Appointment of Committees, Lead Members and Member Champions and Outside Bodies 2022/23	Fire Authority	30.06.22	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Chairman / Vice-Chairman 2022/23	Fire Authority	30.06.22	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Independent Persons	Fire Authority	30.06.22	every four years	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Outturn	Management Committee	18.07.22	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Pensions Governance Abatement Policy	Management Committee	18.07.22	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Q4 Appliance Availability	Management Committee	18.07.22	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme- Presentation	A&GC	28.07.22	Bi annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	28.07.22	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Pensions Update and Pension Board Annual update	A&GC	28.07.22	bi annual	Note	HHR&L&D and Pension Board Chair	N/A	Part I
Annual Governance Statement	A&GC	28.07.22	Annual	Agree	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	28.07.22	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	28.07.22	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q4 Performance Report	A&GC	28.07.22	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
RBFRS Annual Report 21/22	A&GC	28.07.22	Annual	Note	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q1	Management Committee	11.10.22	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q1	Management Committee	11.10.22	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
External Audit report	A&GC	17.10.22	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	17.10.22	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q1 Performance Report	A&GC	17.10.22	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Pensions Update	A&GC	17.10.22	Bi-annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Planning assumptions - Presentation	A&GC	17.10.22	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Lead Member Reports Six Month Update	Fire Authority	01.11.22	Bi-annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Built Environment Update	Fire Authority	01.11.22	Ad-hoc	Note	DCFO	N/A	Part I
Annual Treasury Report	Fire Authority	01.11.22	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee six month update (22/23)	Fire Authority	01.11.22	Bi-annual	Note	ACFO	Collaboration Lead	Part I
External Auditor Appointment	Fire Authority	01.11.22	Ad-hoc	Agree	HF&P		Part I
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	06.12.22	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	06.12.22	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap	A&GC	23.01.23	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	23.01.23	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	23.01.23	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit report	A&GC	23.01.23	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	23.01.23	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme - Presentation	A&GC	23.01.23	Bi annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I
Annual Review of Members Code of Conduct	A&GC	23.01.23	Annual	Note and recommend	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Pension Board six month update	A&GC	23.01.23	bi annual	Note	HHR&L&D and Pension Board Chair	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	7.02.23	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	7.02.23	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	7.02.23	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Annual Budget 23/24, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	15.02.23	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	15.02.23	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Allowances Annual Review 23/24	Fire Authority	15.02.23	Annual	Agree	MO	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.23	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.23	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance	A&GC	28.3.23	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	DChEx	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	Organisational Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Plan 2023/24	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	28.3.23	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Agree	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Built Environment Presentation	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	N/A	Part I
Annual Plan 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Agree	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	27.06.23	Annual	Note	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.06.23	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
Appointment of Committees, Lead Members and Member Champions and Outside Bodies 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.06.23	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Chairman / Vice-Chairman 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.06.23	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I

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