



**Agenda  
for the Meeting  
of the  
Management Committee**

**Monday, 4th December, 2023**

**At**

**6.30 pm**

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

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

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



**MEETING:** Management Committee Meeting

**DATE AND TIME:** Monday, 4th December, 2023 at 6.30 pm

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

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## S U M M O N S

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

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

**GRAHAM BRITTEN**  
Monitoring Officer

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**To: Members of the Management Committee:**

Councillor Wendy Griffith	Councillor Dennis Benneyworth
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Councillor Ishrat Shah	Councillor Paul Gittings
Councillor Mike Smith	Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons
Councillor Helen Taylor	Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey
Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Simon Werner

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

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Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Representative Bodies**

Purpose:

The Chair may, at his discretion, invite the Representative Bodies present to address the Management Committee once on any Part I item, on the prerequisite that the Representative Bodies advise the Chair at the commencement of the meeting of those Agenda items they wish to speak to.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Purpose:

To receive Declarations of Interest from Members 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.

### **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 (Pages 7 - 16)**

Purpose:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 16 October 2023, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **5. Receipt of Announcements**

Recommendation:

To receive announcements from the Chair and / or Chief Fire Officer.

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

Recommendation:

To receive a verbal update on the Authority's external audit, referred by the Audit and Governance Committee.

## **7. ICT Hardware Replacement (Pages 17 - 20)**

Purpose:

To approve the expenditure of £107,000 on end-user equipment.

## **8. 2023/24 Budget Monitoring - Quarter Two (Pages 21 - 34)**

To note the estimated revenue outturn and to receive an update on capital projects at the end of Quarter Two 2023/24 (July – September 2023).

## **9. Quarter Two Appliance Availability by Crewing to Meet Corporate Measures 16 and 17 (Pages 35 - 40)**

Purpose:

To note Appliance Availability by Crewing to Meet Corporate Measures 16 and 17.

## **10. Forward Plan (Pages 41 - 42)**

Recommendation:

To note the Forward Plan.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 6 February 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

## **12. Exclusion of the Public (Pages 43 - 44)**

Recommendation:

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

*Categories of 'Exempt Information' under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.*

**13. Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023** *(Pages 45 - 48)*

Purpose:

That the Part II Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 16 October 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Monday, 16th October, 2023 at 6.30 pm

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Headquarters,  
Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**Members:**  
(\*present)

- |                                  |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * Councillor Peter Frewer        | * Councillor Jeff Brooks             |
| * Councillor Wendy Griffith      | * Councillor Paul Gittings           |
| * Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle | * Councillor Pauline Helliarsymons   |
| * Councillor Ishrat Shah         | * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey |
| * Councillor Mike Smith          | * Councillor Simon Werner            |
| * Councillor Helen Taylor        |                                      |

**In Attendance:**

- Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
- Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
- Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
- Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
- Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
- Dave Crease (Area manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
- Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
- Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
- Jim Powell, (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
- Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DcHEX)
- Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
- Lukasz Wrona (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

**Observers:**

- Paul Brooks
- Mark Hawkins

**Action**

**18. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

There were no questions received from Representative Bodies on any of the agenda items.

**19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for lateness was received from Councillor Ishrat Shah.

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) declared an interest in relation to item 17 (Terms and Conditions of Senior Roles) on the agenda. They informed Members they will leave the meeting during the discussion of item 17.

**21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2023**

**Action from previous Minutes**

Mark Arkwell, DCFO provided an update on the Fireground Radio Replacement project. He stated the project was led by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and all partners had agreed the specification. The capital expenditure for this project will be used in the next financial year.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

**22. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Bereavements in the Service**

It is with great sadness that the Service lost two dedicated public servants in recent weeks.

Nick Oxborough, one of our Fire Safety Inspecting Officers, passed away following a period of illness.

Nick dedicated his career to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, serving both on fire stations across the County and as a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer for more than 40 years.

Sadly, Duncan Morgan-Russell, another Fire Safety Inspecting Officer, passed away late last month.

Duncan made a profound contribution to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in a career of more than 45 years, working in various operational roles and as a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer.

On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chair offered his deepest condolences to the families and friends of Nick and Duncan following their tragic losses.

Members were asked to observe a minute's silence to remember Nick and Duncan.

## **Welcome to new members of the Senior Leadership Team**

On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chair extended a warm welcome to Paul Brooks and Ben Cairns who will shortly join Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Senior Leadership Team

Paul, who was present in the public gallery will join the Service as Head of Assets, a role which combines two previous Head of Department roles of Estates, Fleet and Equipment and Head of Capital Estates Projects into one larger area of responsibility.

Paul brings with him an exceptional wealth of experience including senior military roles with the Royal Engineers and more recently working as Assistant Director of Assets for the Imperial War Museum (IWM).

Ben has taken up the role of Area Manager for Response and Resilience. Ben will be joining the Service from North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, having been with them for 26 years. Ben has held a range of roles within Service Delivery and most recently completed an assignment as Head of Service Improvement, developing their new Community Risk Management Plan. The Chair stated he look forward to working with both Paul and Ben as they begin their new roles with the Service.

## **Investigation into RAAC**

Following an investigation into our estate, the Service conducted additional surveys on sites where we suspected reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) may be present.

The Chair stated, where there was uncertainty over structural integrity, these have now been assessed by structural engineers and are deemed to be safe and appropriate mitigation is in place.

## **Member / Officer Workshop**

A Member/ Officer workshop was held on 4 October. The workshop was an opportunity for Members and Officers to look in more detail at the Service's organisational development plans as well as focussing on implementation of priorities identified in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

The Chair stated he presented a draft Member Charter for discussion. The purpose of the charter is to demonstrate Member support for the Service's work on cultural development. All Members showed great support for the charter and the final version will come to November Fire Authority Meeting for agreement.

The other key outcome from the evening was that Members will establish a cross party task and finish group to support scoping Priority 3 from the CRMP. A second workshop will be held in early 2024.

## **Fire Cadet Recruitment**

The Service was in the process of recruiting its latest cohort of fire cadets. Fire Cadets is a youth initiative for 12 to 16 year olds and is run by firefighters, staff and volunteers with support from the Service's Safety Education Team. The Cadets programme seeks to be representative of the community it serves and actively encourages individuality, diversity and inclusion.

There are four Fire Cadet Units in Berkshire – which are based at Crowthorne Fire Station, Maidenhead Fire Station, Whitley Wood Fire Station and Newbury Fire Station. The Crowthorne unit is fully subscribed. However, the Service are still accepting applications for the other cadet groups. The Chair requested Members to inform constituents or organisations that may be interested in learning more about the Fire Cadets, and to share the word about this youth initiative.

## **Awards Ceremony 2023**

On Saturday, 9 September 2023, the Service annual Awards Ceremony took place at Welford Park, Newbury.

The event was held to recognise and celebrate those within the Service who have gone the extra mile and made great achievements to deliver excellent service.

The Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire, Mr James Puxley presented Long Service and Good Conduct Medals or Clasps, and Long Service Awards to many staff members who have dedicated 20 or 30 years to public service.

The Chair congratulated award winners and Long Service recipients who were deservedly recognised at the event. He also thanked the Lord Lieutenant and the Awards Team.

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

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

## **24. CONTAMINANTS PRESENTATION**

James Hunt, Station Manager, Bracknell Fire Station delivered a presentation on the type of contaminants (toxic cocktail of particulates, gases and vapours) given off at fire incidents. He stated contaminants have been linked to an increased risk of a number of health conditions for operational staff and without adequate procedures, they were easily brought back into fire stations and homes.

He stated the following:

- Firefighting was now recognised as 'carcinogenic to humans' by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO)
- Two cancers had been identified to be the cause by firefighting which were bladder cancer and Mesothelioma
- It was not yet known the full extent of how contaminants affect Firefighters i.e. 40 further cancers linked to Firefighter, other illnesses such as neurological conditions and whether it affects different bodies (male / female and different ethnicities)

Commissioned by the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) an independent report from the University of Central Lancashire published a report to help protect firefighters' health by suggesting preventative measures for minimising exposure to contaminants and best practice for the decontamination of personnel. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRRS) subsequently updated its contaminants policy (2020), supported FBU 'Decon' campaign and videos, developed an contaminants e-learning package (Part 1) and established a Contaminants Project Group in 2021.

James Hunt reported all station layout and facilities were being reviewed to support the effective management of contaminants. A facilities guidance document had been developed with 'minimum' and 'optimal' levels which would be used to inform a gap analysis to identify highest priority works.

Fire stations will be zoned into Red, Controlled, Amber and Green areas and a contaminants exposure log had been developed to capture contaminants profile, length, extent of exposure and barriers to decontamination. This log has been adopted by Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services (FRS').

He reported within the United Kingdom, the NHS medical records system has a provision for 'risk codes' to be assigned to any individual's medical records. The Service will be issuing letters to all staff advising they request their GP's attach the relevant code that applies to them.

He listed other preventative and protection measures the Service has started to examine, such as:

- Contaminants e-learning package – Part 2
- Wildfire PPE
- Risk assessments and control measures for gyms in appliance bays
- Particulate blocking flash hoods
- Breathing Apparatus (BA) set washing machines
- Cancer monitoring
- Contaminant level testing on stations
- Welfare pods for showering at incidents
- The removal of BA sets from cabs in new appliances

Councillor Mike Smith asked whether the Service had received any claims for compensation. Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DcHEX) reported the liability was unknown, however Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) was collecting that data via a tracking system. The data also requires evidence and research. She stated there was no financial provision for liabilities.

In referring to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on managing asbestos in buildings, Councillor Smith asked whether they provided any guidance on contaminants. James Hunt reported to date, HSE had not published any instructions however, they have published and approved workplace exposure limits (WELS).

In answer to a question from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey on when will all stations be updated to reflect contaminants zoning discussed earlier in the presentation. James Hunt reported most stations were currently at a minimum standard and long term have been built into the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF).

In answer to a question from the Chair, James Hunt reported contaminants was a sector wide issue and further research into other illnesses will be made. Nikki Richards referenced the work the National Chief Fire Council (NFCC) were doing on Reproductive Health and National Contaminants Working Group.

For a full copy of the presentation, please contact [Committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:Committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

## **25. AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM CALL FILTERING EVALUATION**

Jim Powell, Area Manager Collaboration and Policy reported a recent evaluation into how the service responded to calls (False Alarms or Unwanted Fire Signals) from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) did not achieve expected results and stated the recommendation of the report was seeking Members approval to set up a Members Task and Finish group to look at solutions in line with Royal Berkshire's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

He outlined the issue of false alarms was highlighted nationally in the first HMICFRS 'State of Fire' report 2019 and, following RBFRS first inspection in 2018, the Service received AFA as an Area For Improvement (AFI).

The Chair acknowledged the small improvement post AFA policy change from June 2022 to May 2023, and urged the importance of Member involvement. He stated other Services were not attending AFA calls. He requested representation from two Members from each political group and Independent or Green member.

In referring to figure 1, page 20 of the report, Councillor Mike Smith asked how many False alarms (48%) were AFAs. Jim Powell stated he would forward those figures to him.

AM C&P

In answer to a supplementary question from Councillor Mike Smith regarding unoccupied commercial premises, Jim Powell reported the current policy requires attendance to properties, following unanswered calls.

Following a question from Councillor Paul Gittings, Jim Powell explained a procedural change was made to Control staff call challenge, however, it was not always applied.

In response to a question from Councillor Ishrat Shah, Jim Powell reported NFCC guidelines requires Fire Services to work with business to look at false alarms. For example, the issue could be due to incorrect installation. He added, the Service's Protection Team help prevent this. He advised, the Service will continue to work with businesses, however, checks were the responsibility of the building owners.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Evaluation report be noted;
- 2) It was agreed to initiate a Member task and finish group to provide strategic direction to the work of Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) priority 5;
- 3) The proposed in principle time line be agreed to deliver a review of the services response to Unwanted Fire Signals in line with the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's CRMP.

## **26. 2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER ONE**

Councillor Mike Smith introduced the report as Budget and Income Generation Lead. Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement reported the 2023/24 Revenue Budget agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2023 was set at £41.975m. Income was anticipated to exceed expenditure by £573,000 which meant the Fire Authority was replenishing its Budget Contingency Reserves.

The overtime forecast was showing £124,000 over budget for the year, however it was offset by Green Book vacancies.

To date the Green Book Pay Award had not been agreed. The cost of new Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices had been built into the forecast with an additional 24 forecast to be taken by the end of the financial year, at a budgetary pressure of £113,000. Similarly, this pressure had been off-set by Green Book vacancies.

The Authority continues to work with a third party to challenge historical and future business rate charges for stations. The additional cost to the current cleaning contract was an increase of £28,000 over the budgeted amount. The

fleet maintenance contract with Hampshire FRS was forecast to be £32,000 over budget. Part of the increase was due to the increased charge rate of vehicle technicians.

Increases in interest rates will result in increased investment income of at least £138,000 more than originally budgeted.

Conor Byrne briefly referred to the Capital expenditure (Appendix C) and Treasury management activity for the quarter (Appendix D).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**27. QUARTER ONE APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY BY CREWING TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 16 AND 17**

David Crease, Area Manager Response and Resilience reported wholetime availability across the quarter was 97.3% against a target of 99%. He stated four watches worked at 94% capacity. The water capability had impacted crewing. 14 appliances were maintained throughout the quarter using On-Call appliances.

In referring to On-Call availability, he stated it was a successful quarter with an overall availability performance of 46.5% against a target of 50%. He added staff retention and recruitment was key to on-call availability. Against a corporate measure target of 75% of emergency incidents attended in 10 minutes, the Service achieved 74.6%.

The Chair congratulated all watches for achieving the above figures.

In referring to recruitment and retention, Councillor Mike Smith asked how many staff had left the Service. Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development reported in quarter one there were, seven transferees and five retirements. Workforce planning continue to monitor leavers and staff turnover of the Service.

Councillor Paul Gittings stated he was pleased to see 14 appliances were available using On-Call appliances in line with priority 6 of the CRMP. He asked whether there was a link between an increase in On-Call availability and those staff feeling more included. Dave Crease reported On-Call staff had provided availability at night.

In referring to paragraph 3.7, Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle queried the risk to the Service, due to six On-Call staff had been offered wholetime contracts. Becci Jefferies reported the Service had been successful in retaining staff in dual contract roles (wholetime and On-Call).

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The 2023/24 quarter one performance of 97.3% appliance availability of the Service's 14 wholetime appliances in line with Corporate Measure 16 be noted.
- 2) The 2023/24 quarter one overall on-call appliance availability performance of 46.5%, in line with Corporate Measure 17 be noted.

**28. FORWARD PLAN**

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

**29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 4 December 2023, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**30. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

**31. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2023**

There were no recorded actions.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

**32. SLOUGH FIRE STATION REFURBISHMENT**

The Chair moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The contract for the refurbishment of Slough Fire Station be approved;
- 2) The expenditure to enable the delivery of the refurbishment project be approved.

**33. COLLABORATION AGREEMENT FOR PENSION AND PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION**

**RESOLVED** that the establishment of a three-year Collaboration Agreement effective from 4 May 2024 be approved.

**34. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SENIOR ROLES**

*Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer and Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer left the meeting at this point of the meeting.*

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The contract of employment for the CFO and DCFO should be amended to include the post holders level 4 strategic command role and is conditioned to be delivered on a continuous basis be agreed.
- 2) The suggested implementation date commences on 1 December 2023 be agreed.

*(The meeting concluded at 8.18pm)*

## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>4 DECEMBER 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ICT HARDWARE REPLACEMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>LUKASZ WRONA, HEAD OF BUSINESS INFORMATION AND SYSTEMS</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR SHEPHERD-DUBEY, LEAD MEMBER STRATEGIC ASSETS AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) has a planned client device replacement programme which seeks to renew end user devices that are at the end of their expected reliable life.
- 1.2 As part of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) approved by the Fire Authority on 15 February 2023, a provision of £107,000 was shown to cover necessary investment in IT hardware (minute reference 66). In order to spend against this provision, the Authority's governance arrangements require a paper to Management Committee to set out the rationale for the expenditure.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

That Management Committee:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the expenditure of £107,000 on end-user equipment.

## 3. REPORT

- 3.1 RBFRS ICT strategy included simplification and collaboration pillars intended to standardise the IT estate and improve the use of collaborative tools, resulting in an increased efficiency.

## Agenda Item 7

- 3.2 RBFRS Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF), most recently reviewed and approved by the Authority in February 2023, outlines equipment replacement plan with a 3-year cycle for replacing end-user devices.
- 3.3 The overall cost of computer hardware has been increasing consistently since the Covid pandemic and associated issues with supply of silicone chips. While the rate of increases appears to be reducing, 2023 has seen significant overall increases in retail pricing of end user computer equipment.
- 3.4 The predominant use of laptop computers is appropriate within RBFRS, underpinning the Service's flexible working arrangements vital to attracting its diverse workforce, as well as its business continuity arrangements.
- 3.5 The standardisation of good quality equipment paired with continual adoption of collaborative tools significantly improved confidence of end-users in reliability and utility of equipment leading to a marked change in behaviours and attitudes towards new technologies.
- 3.6 The Service provided its desired specification for end-user devices to a framework provider in order to identify the vendors and models meeting the brief. From this the Authority will be purchasing equipment that meet its specifications at best price.

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

- 4.1 *Value for Money:* We will Ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The spending falls within the envelope already allocated to hardware refresh by the Fire Authority.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The purchases will be in-line with the Authority's contract regulations. If the recommendation is approved, officers will be required to publish on Contracts Finder: a) the name of the contractor; b) the date on which the contract was entered into; and c) the value of the contract;

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

- 7.1 None identified.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 If we do not maintain our end-user equipment there will be an increased risk of disruption to operations and adversely impacting service's ability to maintain its effectiveness in dealing with incidents, caused by potential inability to access relevant information.
- 8.2 Disrupting operations can have a negative impact on users' confidence in technology and adversely impact Service's ability to increase the use of technology in order to improve productivity.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 Appropriately working ICT equipment is a necessary enabler to effective communication with partner organisations.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, Lead Member Strategic Assets and Sustainability
- 10.2 Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive Officer
- 10.3 Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer
- 10.4 Connor Byrne, Head of Finance

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Strategic Asset Investment Programme (SAIF).
- 11.2 ICT Strategy.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 None.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Lukasz Wrona – Head of Business Information and Systems,  
[wronal@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:wronal@rbfrs.co.uk)

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>4 DECEMBER 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER TWO</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR MIKE SMITH, BUDGET AND INCOME GENERATION LEAD</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To inform members of the estimated revenue outturn and provide an update on capital projects at the end of quarter two 2023/24.
- 1.2 The report also contains a quarterly update on treasury activity.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Management Committee **NOTE** the report.

**3. REPORT**

**Commentary on Revenue Outturn**

- 3.1 The detailed revenue outturn for quarter two, 2023/24 is shown in **Appendix A**. Net costs of TVFCS for quarter 2 are shown in **Appendix B**.
- 3.2 The 2023/24 Revenue Budget agreed by Members in February 2023 was set at £41.975m. Income was anticipated to exceed expenditure by £573,000 meaning that the Fire Authority was replenishing its reserves – specifically the Budget Contingency Reserve.
- 3.3 The forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24 is shown in Appendix A and shows an anticipated surplus of £26,000 compared to the original budget. Variances against individual revenue lines are explained below.

## Agenda Item 8

- 3.4 *Employee costs.* A settlement was reached in 2022/23 for the rates of pay for Grey book staff that also covered the current year. The Service was under establishment for April and May. The 23 new recruits that joined in February are now all on station. A further eight new recruits have since been taken on. Taking into account known leavers, the net result is anticipated to be net cost savings of around £124,000. The overtime forecast is showing as £207,000 over budget for the year. This has been affected by the additional training needs of water rescue MOD 2 and 3. These figures do not take into account any further leavers beyond those that are currently known.
- 3.4.1 On-call stations are currently showing an underspend across the county of £101,000.
- 3.4.2 The Green book pay award has not yet been agreed by the end of quarter 2. A forecast rise of 4% (from 1 April 2023) was used, which is the same as budgeted.
- 3.4.3 The cost of new trainee firefighters has been built into the forecast with an additional 18 forecast to be taken by the end of the financial year, at an additional budgetary pressure of £82,000. This is shown on the non-stations line, which is where new recruit costs are posted while in training and before they go onto stations. This cost has been offset by some vacancies.
- 3.5 *Repairs and Maintenance.* Repairs to the Firehouse at Whitley Wood are ongoing. The total cost of completing works is estimated to be around £92,000.
- 3.6 *Rates.* The Authority continues to work with a third party to challenge business rate charges for stations. Since budget setting, an appeal for Newbury Fire Station was successful resulting in an £11,000 refund and a 6.5% decrease in future bills. The final historical refunds in respect of Dee Road were received in Q1 2023/24.
- 3.7 *Cleaning.* From April 2023 an additional, above inflation, price increase of 8.2% has been applied, due to the living wage increase. In addition, Management Committee agreed a six-month extension to the current contract to allow a re-tendering exercise to be undertaken. Cleaning costs are about £22,500 per month, giving a total yearly cost of £270,000, an increase of £27,000 over the budgeted amount.
- 3.8 *Transport* – The cost of the fleet maintenance contract with Hampshire FRS is forecast to be £42,000 over budget. The increase is due to the increased charge rate for vehicle technicians as well as parts.
- 3.9 *Cross border charges* - These have been agreed with Thames Valley partners for the quarter and, based on this, it is estimated that charges will be £48,000 lower (under *Contracts Other*) and income £14,000 (under *Income Other*) lower than the budgeted targets.

- 3.10 *Interest receivable* – Increases in interest rates will result in increased investment income of £151,000 compared to budget.

### **Capital**

- 3.11 Capital expenditure for quarter 2, 2023/24 and supporting commentary for each respective scheme is shown in **Appendix C**.

### **Treasury**

- 3.12 Treasury management activity for quarter 2 is shown in **Appendix D**. All treasury management operations have been conducted in full compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices.

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

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – Sustainability. We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The 2023/24 Budget includes an appropriation of £573,000 to replenish the Budget Contingency Reserve.
- 5.2 The forecast outturn position on the Revenue Account is a surplus of £26,000.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Expenditure complies with the Authority's Financial Regulations.

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

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

## **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The revenue and capital outturns together with the reserves position are consistent with the assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 8.2 Regular monitoring of expenditure against budgets helps ensure that resources are matched to need.
- 8.3 Treasury activity complies with the Authority's Treasury Management Policy.

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

- 9.1 The duty to collaborate is considered as part of the procurement process for both revenue and capital expenditure.

## Agenda Item 8

### **10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer has noted the contents of the report.

### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Agenda and Minutes, Royal Berkshire Authority: 15 February 2023.

### **12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A – Revenue position at quarter 2, 2023/24

12.2 Appendix B – Net costs of TVFCS at quarter 2, 2023/24

12.3 Appendix C – Capital position at quarter 2, 2023/24

12.4 Appendix D – Treasury activity at quarter 2, 2023/24

### **13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Mark Hawkins  
Finance Manager  
07785 573434

13.2 Conor Byrne  
Head of Finance and Procurement  
07585 991602

	Annual Budget £'000	Q2 Outturn £'000	Forecast to YE £'000	Fcast - Budget Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>				
STATIONS	18,890	9,362	18,873	(17)
NON-STATIONS	12,664	6,058	12,691	27
TRAINING	542	188	545	3
OTHER	300	131	304	4
	<b>32,396</b>	<b>15,739</b>	<b>32,413</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PREMISES</b>				
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	865	587	977	112
RATES	888	482	857	(31)
CLEANING	275	150	302	27
UTILITIES	880	249	880	0
	<b>2,908</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>3,016</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>SUPPLIES</b>				
INSURANCE	443	233	443	0
EQUIPMENT	489	273	502	13
IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES	1,002	642	1,008	6
CLOTHING/PPE	361	251	372	11
COMMUNICATIONS	787	265	788	1
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	268	123	268	0
PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS	141	90	141	0
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES	160	45	111	(49)
SUPPLIES OTHER	211	118	222	11
	<b>3,862</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>3,855</b>	<b>(7)</b>
<b>CONTRACTS</b>				
CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS & COLLABORATION	977	469	988	11
LEGAL	50	15	51	1
CONTRACTS OTHER (incl Professional Services)	871	352	811	(60)
	<b>1,898</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>1,850</b>	<b>(48)</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>				
VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS	800	385	842	42
TRAVEL	248	99	247	(1)
	<b>1,048</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>PENSIONS</b>				
PENSIONS	456	225	456	0
	<b>456</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
GRANTS	(2,080)	(1,861)	(2,089)	(9)
RENTAL INCOME	(216)	(115)	(216)	0
TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME	(394)	(197)	(394)	0
INCOME OTHER	(526)	(66)	(503)	23
	<b>(3,216)</b>	<b>(2,239)</b>	<b>(3,202)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>39,352</b>	<b>18,553</b>	<b>39,477</b>	<b>125</b>
DEBT CHARGES INTEREST	333	108	333	0
INVESTMENT INTEREST	(474)	(181)	(625)	(151)
REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL	1,582	0	1,582	0
APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES	498	0	498	0
FINANCING COSTS	684	0	684	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>41,975</b>	<b>18,480</b>	<b>41,949</b>	<b>(26)</b>
GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS	(41,975)	(24,989)	(41,975)	0
<b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT BEFORE USE OF RESERVES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(6,509)</b>	<b>(26)</b>	<b>(26)</b>

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Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Outturn to Sept 23 £'000</b>	<b>Forecast to Y/E £'000</b>	<b>Forecast Variance £'000</b>
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	1,923	968	1,958	35
<b>CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFRS</b>	394	197	394	0
<b>SUPPLIES/ OTHER</b>	47	(6)	48	1
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	275	109	270	(5)
<b>NET COST OF TVFCS</b>	<b>2,639</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>2,670</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>RBFRS Share of Costs (37%)</b>	977	469	988	11

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Project Owner	Active Capital Projects	Total Project Budget £000's A	Spend in Prior Years £000's B	Spend YTD 2023/24 £000's C	Estimated Project Spend to Completion £000's D	Anticipated spend in 2023/24 £000's E	Total Estimated Project Spend £000's B+C+D	Overall variance on Project	Estimated Project Completion Date	Commentary
Estates Development Programme	Training Centre - pre-construction	352	0	84	268	352	352	0	Q2 25/26	The Training Centre project is on track and in line with SAIF provisions
	Slough refurbishment	780	0	38	742	663	780	0	Q2 24/25	The Slough Fire Station refurbishment is on track, with the budget as approved by the Management Committee on October 16th 2023
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>0</b>		
Fleet & equipment	White Fleet	711	280	133	298	317	711	0	Q4 23/24	There are long lead times on vehicles - however, some have arrived and others will be delivered this financial year. The vehicle for the Environmental Protection Unit has been received and has been converted for use.
	Appliances	2,664	0	0	2,664	900	2,664	0	Q1 26/27	The purchase of 8 Volvo appliances over 3 years is progressing. The purchase order to Emergency One was issued in July 2023.
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>2,962</b>	<b>1,217</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>0</b>		
ICT	Network Refresh (WAN)	394	0	0	404	100	404	10	Q2 24/25	Contract discussions with BT regarding project implementation are ongoing.
	DCS Implementation (SanH)	47	0	0	66	66	66	19	Q2 24/25	This represents our 1/3rd share of a TV collaboration project. Anticipated costs have increased due to Home Office clarification in relation to the specification.
	Software - Firewatch Development	50	0	0	20	20	20	-30	Q4 23/24	Current Firewatch development is for crewing analysis work
	MDT Refresh	141	0	174	0	174	174	33	Q4 23/24	These have been delivered. Overspend due to purchase of additional units, including spares as well as price increases.
	Fireground Radio Replacement	136	0	0	136	0	136	0	Uncertain	Bucks putting together final numbers for project, (Bucks are leading on Tender).
	Station End Refresh	67	0	0	66	66	66	-1	Q4 23/24	Waiting for Procurement sign-off to proceed with order. Completion within year-end and on budget
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>31</b>		
TVFCS	Vision system and UPS replacement	176	88	0	88	88	176	0	Q3 23/24	The project is close to closure with the final payment about to be made.
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5,518</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>4,752</b>	<b>2,746</b>	<b>5,549</b>	<b>31</b>		

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# Treasury Management Update – Q2 2023/24

## Background

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. To demonstrate that the Authority has fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out several indicators.

It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these indicators are reported quarterly.

## Borrowing

The Authority's debt position was unchanged in Q2 2023/24, total debt remaining at £8,922k. No additional borrowing is planned during 2023/24 and none of the existing debt is due to mature during the current financial year.

	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 September 2023 (£000's)</b>	<b>2023/24 Outturn Estimate (£000's)</b>
Debt	8,922	8,922	8,922

## Investment Portfolio

The Authority held investments totalling £13.07m as at 30 September 2023.

During the quarter, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to maintain Bank Rate at 5.25% in September 2023. Funds from the 95-day notice account were re-invested with counterparties paying better rates.

A sum of £10m was invested spread across four counterparties in line with our investment strategy, with different durations based on cash flow needs and the anticipated additional Bank Rate increases throughout the remainder of the financial

## Agenda Item 8

### Appendix D

year. Two fixed term deposits of £2m each will mature on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and will be re-invested to maximise return. A sum of £3.072m is held in a call Account with a UK bank.

The Authority continues to closely monitor liquidity needs and all of these fixed-term deposits mature in the current financial year to provide flexibility where needed. The added advantage of this approach is that if bank rate increases in the future, the Authority will be able to benefit from this when placing further investments.

The budgeted investment return for 2023/24 is £474,000. With the investments placed, as outlined above, the Authority estimates that the total return in 2023/24 will be £625,000.

## Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the Authority to determine and keep under review its affordable borrowing limits. During the quarter ended 30 September 2023, the Authority has complied with the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24. The Head of Finance and Procurement reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators. All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices.

<b>Treasury Indicators</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2023/24 (£000's)</b>
Authorised Limit for external debt	14,422	14,422	14,422
Operational boundary for external debt	9,022	9,022	9,022
Gross external debt	8,922	8,922	8,922
Investments – 30 September 2023		13,072	
Net borrowing – 30 September 2023		(4,150)	

<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing</b>	<b>30 Sept 2023 Actual (£000's)</b>
Under 12 months	0
12 months to 24 months	394
24 Months to 5 Years	597
5 Years to 10 years	3,581
10 Years to 20 Years	1,350
20 Years to 30 Years	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,922</b>

<b>Prudential Indicators</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2023/24 (£000's)</b>
Capital expenditure	4,672	352	2,746
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	10,085	10,085	10,085
Annual change in CFR	(684)	(684)	(684)
In-year borrowing requirement	0	0	0
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	1.95%	1.95%	1.95%

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>4 DECEMBER 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>QUARTER TWO APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY BY CREWING TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 16 AND 17</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>DAVID CREASE AREA MANAGER RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides information on quarter two performance with a supporting narrative on the whole-time duty system and the on-call duty system appliance availability.
- 1.2 Whole-time availability across the quarter was **97.2%** against a target of **99%**.
- 1.3 On-call appliance availability through the quarter was **38.4%** against a target of **60%**. This represents a 1.9% decrease in comparison to Q2 last year.
- 1.4 Crewing and availability across both duty systems remain challenging. The Operational Support team are working closely with Response and Assurance Managers to mitigate the challenge of low staff numbers and high sickness levels combined with high levels of training.
- 1.5 Against a corporate measure target of **75%** of emergency incidents attended in 10 minutes, the Service achieved **72.9%**.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the 2023-24 quarter two performance of **97.2%** appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances in line with Corporate Measure 16<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 **NOTE** the 2023-24 quarter two overall on-call appliance availability performance of **38.4%**, in line with Corporate Measure 17<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 17: Percentage of hours per month where there is adequate crewing on On-Call appliances (fire engines).

**3. REPORT**

**Response activity:**

- 3.1 During Q2, deliberate fires increased slightly compared to Q1. However, performance for primary and secondary fires remains positive against the overall tolerance. It is worth noting that there has been an increase in car fires in West Berkshire.

**Response Standard:**

- 3.2 The response standard during this period was below the target of 75% at 72.9%. However, it represents an improvement on Q2 last year, which was 69.3%. This quarter's figure can be attributed to a higher training requirement in Q2 due to the introduction of a new water training venue for the Module 2 qualification, which required a high number of appliances on a delay to complete the training. Q2 is also a peak leave period for the Service, which can pressure appliance availability.

**Whole-time Duty System Appliance Availability**

- 3.3 This section of the report provides the 2023-24 quarter two performance update against Corporate Measure 16, which is the *percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability*. Overall availability for the quarter was **97.2%**.
- 3.4 RBFRS employ a lean operating model, including the Wholetime Duty System (WDS) provision. With an establishment of 324 staff (81 per duty line), maintaining sufficient minimum numbers of qualified firefighters requires effective management combined with flexibility and commitment to provide additional hours from staff on a pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) basis. Whole-time duty system appliance unavailability can be attributed to several factors, including appliance defects, post-incident activity, training and exercising and primary crewing of specialist appliances. The unavailability of an appliance occurred on 47 occasions (out of 182) during this quarter. However, of those 47 shifts, we maintained 14 appliances utilising On-Call appliances and Wholetime detachments for 83% of the time. The Operational Support team is closely monitoring crewing, which is similar to quarter two of 2022, despite increased training during this period to implement the new Module 2 training and Module 3 qualifications at Slough.

**Ongoing pressures/actions affecting crewing:**

- 3.5 Whole-time staff sickness levels continue to add pressure to the Service's ability to meet its target for corporate measure 16 in relation to crewing. Throughout the quarter, the WDS sickness rate was 4.55%. While a significant amount of work is in place to manage sickness across teams in HR and Service Delivery (monitored through the strategic performance board), we remain over the Service's 4% target. Additionally, the average number of WDS staff on operationally restricted duties during the quarter was 12, which impacts a lean establishment. Service Delivery teams and HR colleagues work

closely to manage and support staff concerning sickness and restricted duties. We plan to roll out a series of engagement sessions in February and March 2024 to support managers in fulfilling their responsibilities relating to absence management.

- 3.6 The leaver profile has continued to present challenges in maintaining consistent establishment levels across our whole-time duty system. Workforce planning and Service Delivery focus on predicting and monitoring leavers, but this has been more volatile over the past two years, particularly concerning the high number of transfer processes to London Fire Brigade. Seven more firefighters have just completed initial training and will land on stations during quarter three.
- 3.7 By virtue of staff turnover during the past two years, the Service now has a high number of operational staff in development roles. The training and assessment requirements add further pressure to the management of appliance availability. Service delivery management continues to work closely with colleagues in learning and development to minimise the impacts of training and development on availability by planning and scheduling courses around other demands.
- 3.8 Service Delivery managers work hard to forecast resourcing gaps in advance and fill these by utilising pre-arranged overtime when appropriate. Mindful that this financially impacts the Service, Service Delivery managers have reviewed several policy positions that should support the management of overtime spending.
- 3.9 On those occasions where sufficient crewing cannot be achieved through the various interventions, the Service's degradation policy is consistently applied to reduce the impact on response standard and manage any other associated risks.

#### **On-Call Duty System Appliance Availability**

- 3.10 The report also details performance against Corporate Measure 17, which sets a target of *60% of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)*. This measure is being applied across the individual and overall availability of the Service's five On-Call appliances. The overall availability for On-Call appliances in quarter two was **38.4%**;
- 3.11 The quarter two performance reflects some of the fragility of the on-call system. The table below provides year-on-year availability since 2017. Notably, there was a period during Covid when performance was significantly higher than before or after. This is attributed mainly to On-Call staff working remotely (or not working) for primary employers.

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Year	Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.
2023	46.5%	38.4%		
2022	44.4%	40.3%	35.9%	41.7%
2021	59.8%	34.7%	36.5%	43.8%
2020 (Covid)	72.4%	60.9%	61.1%	68.2%
2019	45.0%	36.2%	42.5%	45.4%
2018	37.1%	33.0%	38.3%	47.6%
2017	36.3%	33.7%	31.6%	35.8%

*Year on year comparison Identifying Covid restrictions in 2020.*

### Service level pressures/actions

- 3.12 A target of 60% is stretched, which will always be challenging for our On-Call model. Many factors have contributed to overall on-call appliance availability falling short of the 60% target during quarter two. However, it is predominantly related to the challenge of attracting and retaining individuals who can offer daytime appliance availability and losing individuals with critical qualifications such as incident command and emergency response driving. For context, typically, it takes about 18 months to qualify as an operational crew member, three years as a driver and four years as an incident commander.
- 3.13 On-call availability in Q2 was impacted similarly to Wholetime availability, with many staff taking leave during this period. Unfortunately, availability continues to be impacted due to staff in development and key personnel leaving the Service. This accounts for the low availability at Lambourn, specifically where a Junior Officer and Firefighter have left the Service due to no longer living in the cover area.
- 3.14 The on-call station manager in this role has had some successes, including two National Firefighter Selection Test days, which should bring another five recruits into the on-call system. These are due to start in Q3. The driver training team is also looking to trial a modular driving course, making courses more accessible to On-Call staff. We also expect marginal gains in on-call availability through changes to detachment policies, which will offer some flexibility in working across different stations.

**CRMP Consultation**

- 3.15 In recognition of some of the challenges associated with our current appliance availability targets, priority six of the CRMP 2023-27 intends to provide a more flexible approach to our frontline appliance availability across both duty systems whilst maintaining a commitment to our response standard and balancing the budget.

**4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The use of pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) continues to be utilised to support a lean crewing model and to mitigate other extractions. Due to some of the pressures experienced through the quarter, expenditure is above planned levels. Recognising the financial pressures the Service is currently experiencing and anticipating going forward, a task group has been established to scrutinise PAOT usage to bring the financial cost back in line with budget expectations.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None Identified.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None identified.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The provision of sufficient minimum qualified firefighters and appliance availability is listed as a corporate risk under risk 681. It is monitored by the Director of Service Delivery, and, as necessary, treatments are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Audit and Governance Committee.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 None identified.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None.

**11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1 None.

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### 12. **CONTACT DETAILS**

- 12.1 Ben Cairns – Area Manager Response and Resilience, Service Delivery  
[carinsb@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:carinsb@rbfrs.co.uk)

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Statement of Assurance	A&GC	24.01.24	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Governance Statement	A&GC	24.01.24	Annual	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Gender, Ethnicity and Equality Pay Gap	A&GC	24.01.24	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal assessment of effectiveness within discipline	A&GC	24.01.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	24.01.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	24.01.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	24.01.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Draft Annual Budget 24/25	Management Committee	6.02.24	Annual	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Training Centre Redevelopment	Management Committee	6.02.24	Ad-hoc	Note	DCFO	N/A	Part I
CRMP P4 Statutory Duties report	Management Committee	6.02.24	Ad-hoc	agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	6.02.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	6.02.24	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 24/25, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Code of Conduct Consultation	Fire Authority	15.02.23	Annual	Note	MO	N/A	Part I
AFA consultaion proposal	Fire Authority	15/02/24	Ad-hoc	Agree	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
RBFRS Development Programme	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Ad-hoc	Note	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.24	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.24	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	28.3.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	Member Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances / Code of Conduct annual consultation results	A&GC	28.3.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme - Presentation	A&GC	28.3.24	Annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	28.3.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2024/25	Fire Authority	22.04.24	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
AFA Consultation results	Fire Authority	22/04/24	Ad-hoc	Agree	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	22.04.24	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I

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

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

**Qualifications:**

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

## Agenda Item 12

in disclosing the information.

### **Interpretation:**

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

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

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