



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

**Monday, 10th February, 2025**

**At**

**6.30 pm**

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

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

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



**MEETING:** Management Committee Meeting

**DATE AND TIME:** Monday, 10th February, 2025 at 6.30 pm

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

---

## 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 Management Committee:**

Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Councillor George Blundell	Councillor Paul Gittings
Councillor Wendy Griffith	Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	Councillor Simon Werner
Councillor Helen Taylor	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Wayne Smith	

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

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, 10th February, 2025 at 6.30 pm

**VENUE:** Lynda Kenyon Suite  
RBFRS Headquarters  
Newsham Court  
Pincent's Kiln  
Calcot  
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 4 December 2024 (Pages 7 - 16)**

Purpose:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on Wednesday 4 December 2024 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:

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

**7. Automatic Fire Alarm Update - Presentation**

Recommendation

To receive a presentation on Automatic Fire Alarm update.

**8. Precept Consultation Results (To Follow)**

Purpose:

To conscientiously consider the Precept Consultation Results and recommend to the Fire Authority to note.

**9. Annual Budget 25/26, Medium Term Financial Plan, SAIF and TVFCS Budget (To Follow)**

Purpose:

To note and recommend the 2025/26 Annual Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, SAIF and TVFCS Budget to the Fire Authority for approval.

**10. Recruitment and Retention Working Group Report (Pages 17 - 26)**

Purpose:

To note the work undertaken and recommendations from the Recruitment and Retention Working Group, and agree that a progress report be brought back to Management Committee in six months.

**11. Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review (Pages 27 - 44)**

Purpose:

To note and recommend the Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review to the Fire Authority for approval.

**12. Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3 - 2024/25 (Pages 45 - 58)**

To note revenue and capital outturns against budget up to the end of quarter three 2024/25 (October – December 2024).

**13. Appliance Availability Quarter 3 (Pages 59 - 68)**

Purpose:

To note the Appliance Availability for quarter three.

**14. Forward Plan** (*Pages 69 - 70*)

Recommendation:

To note the Forward Plan.

**15. Date of next meeting**

Monday 7 April 2025 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**16. Exclusion of the Public** (*Pages 71 - 72*)

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 Paragraph 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.*

**17. Part II Minutes of the meeting on 4 December 2024** (*Pages 73 - 74*)

Purpose:

That the Part II Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 4 December 2024, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**18. Langley Fire Station Refurbishment - Multi Disciplinary Consultancy** (*Pages 75 - 82*)

Purpose:

To note the contents of the report and agree costs for professional services, design and planning of Langley Fire Station Refurbishment.

**19. Contingency Fire Crew Arrangements Update** (*Pages 83 - 92*)

Purpose:

To agree the Contingency Fire Crew arrangements contract.

---

This page is intentionally left blank

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Held on Wednesday, 4th December, 2024 at 6.30 pm

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Newsham Court,  
Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD



**Members:**  
(\*present)

- |                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Councillor George Blundell     | Councillor Dave McElroy              |
| * Councillor Jeff Brooks       | * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey |
| * Councillor Peter Frewer      | * Councillor Wayne Smith             |
| * Councillor Paul Gittings     | Councillor Helen Taylor              |
| * Councillor Wendy Griffith    | Councillor Simon Werner              |
| Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle |                                      |

**In Attendance:** Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
Tom Brandon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)  
Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)  
Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)  
Paul Brooks (Head of Assets, HoA)  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
Dave Crease (Area Manager, Protection and Protection, AM P&P)  
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)  
Lukasz Wrona (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

**Observer:** Councillor Tricia Brown

**Action**

**37. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

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

**38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors George Blundell, Tina McKenzie-Boyle, Helen Taylor and Simon Werner.

Councillor Dave McElroy was in attendance virtually.

**39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**40. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2024**

Paul Brooks, Head of Assets confirmed the action to present a Sustainability roadmap will be presented as item 9 on this agenda.

Tom Brandon, Area Manager Response and Resilience confirmed the action to circulate Quarter One Appliance Availability presentation to Management Committee Members was completed.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting on 8 October 2024, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

**41. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Awards Ceremony**

On the evening of Friday, 29 November, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) held its annual staff Awards Ceremony at the Select Car Leasing Stadium in Reading.

The event was held to recognise and celebrate those within the Service for their long service and those who have gone the extra mile over the last 12 months.

The Chair stated it was a pleasure to attend the event and a privilege to present awards to staff on the evening. He expressed his thanks to those Members who were able to attend this event and congratulated the award winners and Long Service recipients who were deservedly recognised.

The Chair also offered his additional thanks to the Awards Team for their work in putting together a brilliant ceremony for staff.

**Whitley Wood Training Centre**

The Chair updated members on the progress of the new Training Centre building in Whitley Wood.

On Monday, 18 November, the first modules of the new building began arrived on-site. By that Thursday afternoon (21 November), the structure of the new Training Centre building was complete.

On Friday, 22 November, the Service hosted a small event attended by Councillors Shepherd-DuBey and Timlin. They were shown the new building and given a short presentation on the project by representatives from Premier Modular Limited, and Paul Brooks; Head of Assets.

Work on the new building is continuing, and it is expected Training Centre staff will move into their new home in March 2026, less than nine months since the beginning of substantive works on the site.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chair expressed his thanks to partners, Premier Modular Limited and Ridge Consultancy for their work on this project, as well as Yuan Yang MP for attending on the day. He also thanked the project team for the efforts in bringing our new Training Centre to life.

### **On-call Graduation**

On Friday, 29 November, before the beginning of our Awards ceremony, the Service welcomed four new On-call Firefighters at a short ceremony at Mortimer Fire Station.

Firefighters Nick White, Lewis Dersou, Luca Batchelor and Oleg Yaschenko, were welcomed to the Service. They all recently completed their initial training courses and will now join crews at On-call stations around the county.

The Chair congratulated and wished them all the best in their new roles.

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

There were no issues from Audit and Governance Committee.

## **43. RBFA ICT STRATEGY 2024 - 2027**

Lukasz Wrona, Head of Business and Information Systems (HBIS) presented Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) ICT Strategy and outlined progress since the last strategy period (2019-2024) until present:

- Standardised equipment
- Microsoft 365 adoption and consolidation of systems into 365
- Completed Cloud feasibility evaluation and chosen MS Azure
- Improved business continuity and coverage
- Introduced Technical Programme Management

The new ICT strategy (2024-2027) outlined the future vision:

- Cloud-first approach, upgraded infrastructure, improved cybersecurity.
- Upskilling workforce, fostering digital innovation.
- Unified data strategy and integrated data intelligence platform supporting real-time decision-making insights.
- 'Zero paper' processes policy, agile project management.
- Enhanced alignment with Thames Valley partners and other fire and rescue services.

In answer to the Chair's question on the action plan (page 30), Lukasz Wrona stated the zero paper processes policy was ambitious, however an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) would be completed. He added the aim of the strategy was to introduce efficiencies where possible.

Both Councillor Shepherd-DuBey and the Vice-Chair commented on the positive changes outlined. The Vice-Chair asked in terms of collaboration with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue partners, how does the strategy align with our goals.

Lukasz Wrona provided examples of collaboration work, in particular, Fireground radio and the software for MDT had been a joint procurement with Thames Valley partners. He stated that continued opportunities would be explored on joint processes or contracts.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer reported there were several collaboration projects running across the Thames Valley with partners and stated that some joint projects were dependant on contract harmonisation (waiting for respective contracts to come to its natural end prior to procuring new joint contracts). For example, respective Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) contracts all expired at different times and dates had to be aligned to procure a new contract.

Wayne Bowcock also listed the joint procurement projects completed by Thames Valley FRS partners and Royal Berkshire FRS involvement with National Chief Fire Council (NFCC) in various national projects.

Councillor Shepherd-DuBey moved the recommendation, which was seconded by the Vice Chair. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The content of the document including progress since its last 2019-2024 strategy be noted;
- 2) The evaluation of the RBFRS resources and capabilities within the document be noted;
- 3) The action plan within the strategy document be noted; and
- 4) The RBFA ICT Strategy 2024-2027 (Appendix A) be approved.

For a copy of the presentation contact [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

#### **44. 2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER TWO**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P) reported the revenue outturn for 2024/25 (Appendix A) had shown an anticipated surplus of £26,000. The Grey Book pay award agreed from 1 July 2024 of 4% (against a budget rate of 3.75%) was an additional pressure of £39,000.

18 new recruits taken on in July 2024 have joined stations in November 2024. The forecast net cost savings on station salaries was £419,000. The overtime budget forecast was showing £586,000 over budget for the year, due to the

delay in the implementation of Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Priority 6, time taken to recruit additional firefighters, cover for staff sickness, light duties and training.

The Green Book pay award had been finalised at an average of 3.38% against the forecast of 3.75%, an estimated saving against the budget of £33,000.

Occupational Health costs were forecast to be £46,000 higher than budget due to cost increases, as well as Pension costs was forecast £34,000 higher due to additional Injury award costs.

The Service received an additional grant for Pension contributions which had come in £87,00 higher than budgeted. As well as additional income from investments had come in higher than budgeted. Interest rates from money on deposit forecast to yield was £270,000 more in revenue than originally budgeted.

In relation to paragraph 3.13 (Interest receivable), the Chair requested for an accurate figure to be provided at the next Budget Working Party meeting.

In a discussion on capital projects, Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) SALIX funding and the delay in the major redevelopment of Langley Fire Station, Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO) reported capital projects were reliant on external contractors. Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) highlighted the Service were good at completing projects to budget.

The Chair commented the Authority's financial position was healthy and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **45. SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME - PROPOSED ROADMAP**

Paul Brooks, HoA, presented the sustainability roadmap and advised the report provided a check list on proposed project delivery streams to the Sustainability Strategy 2024-2029 agreed by Management Committee on 8 October 2024 (minute reference 27). He stated RBFRS recognised the climate emergency and the social, economic, global and local issues which culminated the production of the strategy. The roadmap identified three phases:

- Phase 1 – Reflection and short term
- Phase 2 – Near to medium term
- Phase 3 – Long term

Paul Brooks outlined the journey to date and listed some of the proposed project streams from updating waste contract to Assets (Estates, Fleet & Equipment and Supplies) to achieve the long-term goal of reducing carbon emissions and to

develop a sustainable way of working. He highlighted the investment the Authority had already made on the installation of LED lighting across the estate. All projects within the SAIF were committed to sustainability.

The Vice-Chair queried the caveats in red in Appendix A (largely highlighted as un-resourced), however stated the project streams in the roadmap was the right thing to do and would make considerable long-term savings.

The Chair requested for an update on the roadmap to be presented to Management Committee every six months. Mark Arkwell reported the Estates Development and Sustainability Working Party will review the roadmap more closely.

The Chair moved the recommendations which was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The proposed RBFRS Sustainability Programme roadmap be noted.
- 2) It be noted additional resources will be required to develop and deliver the programme (to be articulated in a future paper).

For a copy of the presentation contact [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

#### **46. QUARTER TWO APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 14, 15 & 16**

Tom Brandon, Area Manager Response and Resilience (AM R&R) reported wholetime availability across quarter two was 95.2% against a target of 97.4%, and on-call availability across the above quarter was 35.5% against a target of 50%. The on-call percentage was a 1.4 percentage point increase in comparison to quarter one.

He outlined the baseline provision of 14 or more pumping appliances, combined wholetime and on-call was 70.7% against a target of 100%. In detailing the wholetime availability for the quarter, Tom Brandon stated that spate conditions due to flooding meant call volumes in September were high which had an impact on call handling and travel times.

The Service has a lean operating model. There were 16 leavers across quarter one and two. Pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) was not limited during the above quarters, however very high demand for leave during the summer months and sickness absence impacts staffing and the availability of appliances.

Over the last 18 months, recruitment for on-call has had 15 new starters, one re-joiner, a new dual contract and two personnel returning from sabbaticals. The percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances increased in quarter 2 at the following on-call stations; Crowthorne, Hungerford and Maidenhead. Lambourn had minimal availability

and Mortimer saw a decrease in availability from quarter one but it was still above the 50% target.

Tom Brandon explained the new measure of combined pumping appliance availability by shift was introduced this year to monitor the Service's compliance to the CRMP P6 commitment to ensure a baseline service provision of 14 pumping appliances. P6 was introduced on 16 September and stated this new policy alongside new apprentices that started in November will improve this measure.

The Chair concurred that P6 will impact appliance availability positively. Tom Brandon confirmed the findings from this new measure will be presented at the Members workshop in January 2025. He provided the figures from this measure from 16 September to date. There were 67 shifts where wholtime appliances were not available. There were 14 occasions during the period on-call appliances were mobilised. During the same period, there were 29 occasions Pre-arranged Overtime (PAOT) could have been avoided. He stated that improvements were beginning to be seen in availability.

The Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock reported that the interim update of this policy showed a positive impact. Had we not implemented this policy when we did, the overtime budget would have increased. He also stated it had made a case to why this policy was not implemented to include day shifts.

In answer to a comment from the Chair, Mark Arkwell reported the purpose of P6 was to use on-call staff more and to reduce the overtime budget. This would allow the Service to re-invest in frontline services.

The Chair felt that it was important to stress to Fire Brigade Union (FBU) Officials at Fire Liaison Group (FLG) meetings that the reduction of the overtime budget would be used to re-invest back into the Service. The Vice-Chair concluded over time further trends may occur especially with the recruitment of new Firefighters. He stated we should see a positive impact on appliance availability.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The 2024/25 quarter two performance of 95.2% appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances, in line with Corporate Measure 14 be noted.
- 2) The 2024/25 quarter two overall on-call appliance availability performance of 35.5%, in line with Corporate Measures 15 be noted; and

- 3) The 2024/25 quarter two performance of 70.7% of shifts where 14 or more pumping appliances were available, in line with Corporate Measure 16 be noted.

**47. FORWARD PLAN**

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

**48. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 10 February 2025, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**49. EXCLUSION OF 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 Paragraph 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.

**50. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2024**

An amended version of the Part II minutes was tabled at the meeting. The amendment was made by Mark Arkwell, DCFO. He explained that the amended version detailed the costs of the Contingency Fire Crew arrangements: Industrial Action Resilience was an example and not the actual cost of the future contract.

The Chair moved the recommendation to amend the Part II Minutes of the last meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Wendy Griffith.

**RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes (amended tabled version) of the meeting on 8 October 2024, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

*Post meeting note – Amended Part II Minutes were subsequently republished on RBFRS website.*

**51. DECARBONISATION PHASE ONE UPDATE**

Paul Brooks, Head of Assets (HoA), provided an update on the Decarbonisation Phase One update. He stated the Authority received Public Sector

Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) 3c grant which was augmented with of the Authority's capital investment approved by the Fire Authority on 22 April 2024.

Paul Brooks reported the age and condition of RBFRS estate coupled with detailed surveying identified high risk issues had arisen, for example two failed boilers including system pipework and poor roofing conditions. To mitigate the risks identified it is anticipated a revised budget will be required.

He reported LED and installation of solar panels could be brought from the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF). He reassured Management Committee the project remained on track and was ready to go to tender and that the abandonment of the project was not an option. The Authority's Estates Development and Sustainability Working Group (EDSWG) had been informed of the above.

The Chair stated it would be counterproductive not to continue with this project.

In answer to a query from Councillor McElroy, Paul Brooks reported there was an opportunity to differentiate between maintenance and sustainability.

The Chair moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Wendy Griffith.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The contents of the report be noted.

*(The meeting concluded at 8:09pm)*

This page is intentionally left blank

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT WORKING GROUP REPORT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>CLLR JEFF BROOKS, FIRE AUTHORITY CHAIR</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the matters considered by the Member/Officer Retention and Recruitment Working Group.
- 1.2 The Working Group was established in May 2024 and met on three occasions to receive presentations and review data and information provided by Officers on recruitment and retention matters.
- 1.3 The Working Group made a number of recommendations for areas of focus and these were agreed by Officers to support work already underway.
- 1.4 Subject to agreement by the Management Committee, a progress report will be produced and considered after six months.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Management Committee is invited to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the work undertaken by the Retention and Recruitment Working Group in line with the Terms of Reference (Appendix A);
- 2.2 **NOTE** the recommendations made by the Working Group and agreed by Officers in relation to areas of focus as outlined in 3.6 (a-e); and

## Agenda Item 10

- 2.3 **AGREE** that a report on progress should be brought back to Management Committee in six months

### 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 Following a recommendation from the Chair of the Authority, a Member/Officer engagement forum to consider key challenges and opportunities regarding staff retention and recruitment across Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) was established in May 2024.
- 3.2 The Retention and Recruitment Working Group comprised the Chair of the Fire Authority; Councillor Jeff Brooks, the Vice-Chair; Councillor Paul Gittings and Councillors Dennis Benneyworth, Wendy Griffith, Tina McKenzie-Boyle and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey. Officers in attendance were deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Mark Arkwell and Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and L&D. The first meeting was also supported by Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Katie Mills and Station Manager Matt Riley attended the final working group meeting to present recruitment and retention issues as they relate to On-call staff.
- 3.3 The Working Group met on three occasions (21 May, 1 August and 12 November 2024). The first meeting approved the terms of reference for the group (see Appendix A) and Becci Jefferies provided an overview of the context and challenges in relation to recruitment and retention in RBFRS.
- 3.4 Following the presentation, Members sought additional data and information about various aspects which included areas such as the recruitment metrics considered and the number of operational staff transferring out of the Service to other fire and rescue authorities.
- 3.5 The interest and experiences of Members stimulated discussion and resulted in Officers introducing, during the life of the Working Group, some positive changes to support monitoring of performance in these areas. For example, the provision of additional recruitment metrics e.g. monitoring the ratio of applications to interviews and the collation/ analysis of new starter feedback at eight weeks in Service were introduced following debate on how we could learn more about our processes and candidate experience.
- 3.6 The Working Group noted the activities already being undertaken by Officers and the planned work to support management of an effective workforce, aligned to the objectives laid out in the People Strategy. The Group were able to provide additional focus on what could, in the short term, be prioritised. The work recommended by the Working Group and agreed by Officers relates to the following areas:
- a. **Employee Value Proposition:** Undertake a review of the current Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and identify opportunities for improvement. Noting how an effective EVP is critical to attracting, engaging, and retaining top talent, and how it needs to be aligned with the organisation's brand and strategic objectives. The review will be commissioned and managed through the governance structure associated with the Culture Plan, and will gather data on employee perceptions,

benchmark against sector standards, and develop recommendations to strengthen the EVP to better meet the needs of the workforce and competitive landscape. The Project Initiation Document is drafted and is being considered by the SLT accordingly.

- b. **Referral Scheme:** Assessment of how a referral scheme to help attract and secure successful applicants into post within RBFMS may be introduced. This will be considered by the SLT in the early part of 2025.
  - c. **Review the Application Process:** Examine the workflow and passthrough rates throughout the hiring process to understand the effectiveness of practices and identify any improvements. Examine the functionality and attractiveness of the career section on the website.
  - d. **Improve the Career Pages on Website:** following the application process review and in line with outputs from the EVP project, make changes to the career pages on the website .
  - e. **Review Candidate Experience:** Understand the candidate experience, why candidates register interest, feedback mechanisms to candidates on performance and opportunities for retaining the interest of candidates for future positions.
- 3.7 The Retention and Recruitment Working Group have considered that an update on progress should be brought and recommend that this is considered by the Management Committee in six months.

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

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

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Initiatives to support and improve recruitment and retention will be considered in line with normal business process e.g. through business case consideration/ project governance, via the SLT decision making process or through specific budget bids.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report although all recruitment and retention ideas arising from the working group or other initiatives identified by Officers, will be mindful of employment legislation and any constraint or consideration arising from that as necessary.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications arising from this report. All recruitment and retention ideas arising from the working group or other initiatives identified by Officers will be equality impact assessed to ensure that the potential impacts of a proposed change or activity on various groups, particularly those protected by the Equality Act (2010), are identified and considered.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report; however it is noted that the inability to attract or retain employees would threaten the ability to provide services to the public and meet the Service's statutory duties.
- 8.2 Officers continue to closely monitor and assess risk to ensure sufficient staff are employed and suitably trained to deliver services. Regular reports are shared through the Service's Workforce Planning Group.

**9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

**10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 10.1 The engagement of Members and Officers through the working group has enabled the sharing of good practice. RBFRS will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with other fire and rescues services, authorities or agencies where appropriate to do so.

**11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 Chair of the Fire Authority – Jeff Brooks
- 11.2 Member / Officer Recruitment and Retention Working Group

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None.

**13. APPENDICES**

13.1 Appendix A – Retention and Recruitment Working Group – Terms of Reference – May 2024

**14. CONTACT DETAILS**

14.1 Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and L&D, 07776225975

This page is intentionally left blank

# Retention & Recruitment Working Group

Terms of Reference

May 2024



## Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. A Member/Officer engagement forum considering key challenges and opportunities regarding staff retention and recruitment across RBFRS. This will be focussed on staffing groups where current and anticipated challenges are most prevalent. i.e. Operational staff, Fire Protection and professional services.
- 1.2. To act as a Member stakeholder group in support of the Authority's ambitions and to make recommendations to the Service with improvements or solutions to key challenges.
- 1.3. This Group is not a decision-making forum; it is an informal meeting to help shape and challenge and to assist in informing wider Authority/Service decision making committees.

### 2. Membership

- 2.1. Chair of the Fire Authority and up to six other Members as appointed by the Chair. The appointment of Members should consider that political groups are adequately represented.
- 2.2. Head of Human Resources with departmental support as required, Director of Operations (DCFO) Estates, Head of Finance & Procurement, Director of Service Delivery (or deputies as required)

### 3. Chair

- 3.1 Chair of the Fire Authority

### 4. Frequency of Meetings

- 4.1. There will be three initial sessions convened.
- 4.2. Location of meetings will be advised in advance with options included for virtual attendance.
- 4.3. Terms of Reference to be following the initial three sessions.

### 5. Agenda

- 5.1 Agenda for each meeting will be produced by the Head of Human Resources in liaison with the Chair of this group and circulated by Democratic Support Lead / Democratic Support Assistant.
- 5.2 Areas for consideration include:  
Session 1 – Strategic context, current arrangements for targeted staff groups  
Session 2 – Employee Value Proposition: Challenges / Opportunities, (S3 agenda)  
Session 3 – (TBC), Execution and Next steps



This page is intentionally left blank

## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>2025/26 SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE REVIEW</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>NOTE AND RECOMMEND</b>

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To recommend an update to the 2025/26 Member Scheme of Allowance to the Fire Authority for approval.
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2) require the Authority to make a Scheme of Allowances before the beginning of the financial year; and, before it makes it, to have regard to the recommendations made by Independent Remuneration Panels of its constituent councils.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the report;
- 2.2 **RECOMMEND** that the Fire Authority;
- 2.3 **APPROVE** that 2.5% uplifted rate of allowances in accordance with annual local government Green Book be applied to Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2025 (Appendix A);
- 2.4 **APPROVE** that the Scheme of Allowances continues to be indexed to the annual local government Green Book increase for allowances (should any increase be agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services in 2025/26);
- 2.5 **NOTE** that recommendations made by each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) have been reviewed in line with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2). (Background papers of each Unitary Authority IRP is located in paragraph 12).

# Agenda Item 11

## **3. REPORT**

3.1 On an annual basis the Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowance prior to the start of the financial year. The Authority's Scheme of Allowance is indexed to National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services pay agreement for staff employed under 'Green Book' terms and conditions.

3.2 Each year, the NJC negotiates a pay agreement and on 22 October 2024, a 2.5% agreement was reached on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2024 for 2024/25. Attached as appendix B is the National Joint Council for local government services letter. It states:

*'All locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer, should be increased by 2.50 per cent, in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.41.'*

3.3 This report is seeking Members to approve the NJC 2.5% rates negotiated on 22 October 2024 be applied to the Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2025 (Appendix A) as stated in paragraph MA 14 of the Scheme of Allowances below.

*'MA14. The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage allowance increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year for the year the index is applied to staff.'*

### Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs)

3.4 There are six Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) in the Royal County of Berkshire, which make Scheme of Allowance recommendations to Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council. Each Unitary Authority IRP recommendations have been reviewed for the purpose of this report. Links have been provided in paragraph 12 from each IRP recommendation in Berkshire.

3.5 Bracknell-Forest, Reading, Slough, Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils Scheme of Allowance are indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council's Scheme of Allowance are updated annually in line with the average pay increase given to Royal Borough employees (and rounded to the nearest pound as appropriate).

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

4.1 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is estimated to be in the region of £102k. Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a Berkshire newspaper. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £400.

5.2 An Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances is held every four years. The last independent review was held in September 2023 by South East Employers. The next Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances will be held in 2027/28.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 No risk implications have been identified.

**9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 No sustainability implications have been identified.

**10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

10.1 Not applicable.

**11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

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

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 [Bracknell Forest Council members Allowances Scheme](#)

12.2 [Reading Borough Council – Constitution of the Council May 2024 – amended October 2024](#)

12.3 [Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council – A Review of Members' Allowances June 2022](#)

12.4 [Slough Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme](#)

12.5 [West Berkshire Council – Report of Independent Remuneration Panel June 2024](#)

## Agenda Item 11

12.6 [Wokingham Borough Council meeting – Thursday 21 January 2021 – Review of Members' Allowances by the IRP](#)

### 13. **APPENDICES**

13.1 Appendix A – 2025/26 RBFA Scheme of Allowances.

13.2 Appendix B – October 2024 - National Joint Council for local government services letter.

### 14. **CONTACT DETAILS**

14.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead [rowef@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:rowef@rbfrs.co.uk)

14.2 Michaela Smith, Democratic Support Assistant [smithm@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:smithm@rbfrs.co.uk)

# SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

April 2025



## MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

### INTRODUCTION

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

### NAME AND DURATION

- MA1. This scheme may be cited as the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Allowances Scheme.
- MA2. **This scheme shall have effect for the financial year 2025/26.** The Scheme may be amended at any time by resolution of the Authority.

### BASIC ALLOWANCE

- MA3. A **Basic Allowance** at a rate of £2,913.05<sup>1</sup> per annum shall be paid to each member in monthly instalments.
- MA4. For the avoidance of doubt, 'Member' in this context means a person appointed to the Authority under the provisions of the Royal Berkshire Fire Service Combination Scheme.
- MA5. The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of Members including calls on their time at meetings with officers and constituents. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of Members' homes.
- MA6. Where a Member's term of office does not extend throughout a complete year, the amount payable shall be pro rata to the number of days during which his/her term of office subsists.

---

<sup>1</sup> Indexed to local government percentage allowance increase agreed by NJC on 22 October 2024.

## SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

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

### Schedule 1

Position	Special Responsibility Allowance <sup>2</sup>
Chair of Authority	<b>£14,566.28 (was £14,211)</b>
Vice-Chair of Authority	<b>£7,282.63 (was £7,105)</b>
Chair of Committees	<b>£4,369.58 (was £4,263)</b>
Lead Members	<b>£4,369.58 (was £4,263)</b>
Opposition Group Leaders	<b>£2,913.05 (was £2,842)</b>
Member Champions	<b>£1,456.53 (was £1,421)</b>
RBFA Chair of Thames Valley Joint Committee (if applicable)	<b>£2,913.05 (was £2,842)</b>
Co-optees' Allowance	<b>£159.90 (was £156)</b> per meeting

MA8. Where a Member holds one of the above positions for part of a year, the amount payable shall be pro rata to the number of days he/she holds that position.

MA9. A Member may not receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance at any one time. Therefore, a Member holding more than one of the positions of special responsibility must notify the Monitoring Officer to the Authority in writing which Special Responsibility Allowance he/she wishes to be paid.

## CO-OPTEEES' ALLOWANCE

MA10. The Co-opted Independent Person (s) shall be entitled to receive a payment of **£159.90** per meeting.

MA11. Independent Persons are entitled to receive only the allowances under this scheme for the duties they undertake on behalf of the Fire Authority.

<sup>2</sup> Indexed to local government percentage allowance increase agreed by NJC on **22 October 2024**.

## SCHEDULE 2 – APPROVED DUTIES

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

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

MA13. The amounts of allowances paid by the Authority are set out in paragraphs MA3 and MA7.

## INDEXATION OF ALLOWANCES

- MA14. The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage allowance increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year for the year the index is applied to staff.
- MA15. The rates of travel allowances shall be the same as those approved by the HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) and shall be adjusted and take effect in line with alterations made from time to time by the HMRC.
- MA16. The rates of subsistence allowances shall be the same as those agreed for officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- MA17. The Chief Finance Officer shall have delegated power to approve the adjustment in accordance with paragraphs MA15 and MA16 above.

## RENUNCIATION OF ALLOWANCES REPAYMENT

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

## CLAIMS

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

## Agenda Item 11

### Appendix A

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

## SCHEDULE 3 - TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

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

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

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

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

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



This page is intentionally left blank

# National Joint Council for local government services

**Employers' Secretary**  
Naomi Cooke

**Trade Union Secretaries**

Mike Short, UNISON  
Sharon Wilde, GMB

**Address for correspondence**  
Local Government Association  
18 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3HZ  
Tel: 020 7664 3000  
[info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)

**Address for correspondence**  
UNISON Centre  
130 Euston Road  
London NW1 2AY  
Tel: 0845 3550845  
[l.government@unison.co.uk](mailto:l.government@unison.co.uk)

**To: Chief Executives in England, Wales and N Ireland  
(to be shared with Finance Director and HR Director)  
Regional Employer Organisations  
Members of the National Joint Council**

22 October 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2024**

Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible.

Agreement has been reached on rates of pay applicable from **1 April 2024** (covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025). The new pay rates, each increased by £1,290 per annum, are attached at **Annex 1**.

All locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer, should be increased by 2.50 per cent, in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4<sup>1</sup>.

The new rates for allowances, uprated by 2.50 per cent, are set out at **Annex 2**.

### **Joint work**

It has been agreed that there will be joint discussions on how the NJC can capture gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap information that will be of most benefit to the sector.

### **Backpay for employees who have left employment since 1 April 2024**

If requested by an ex-employee to do so, we recommend that employers should pay any monies due to that employee from 1 April 2024 to the employee's last day of employment.

When salary arrears are paid to ex-employees who were in the LGPS, the employer must inform its local LGPS fund. Employers will need to amend the CARE and final pay figures (if the ex-employee has pre-April 2014 LGPS membership) accordingly.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

## Agenda Item 11

### Appendix B

Further detail is provided in [section 15 of the HR guide](#) and the [Backdated Pay Award FAQs](#), which are available on the [employer resources section](#) of [www.lgpsregs.org](http://www.lgpsregs.org).

Yours faithfully,

*Naomi  
Cooke*

**Naomi Cooke**

*M. R. Short*

**Mike Short**

*Sharon Wilde*

**Sharon Wilde**

SCP	01-Apr-23		01-Apr-24	
	per annum	per hour	per annum	per hour
1	<i>Deleted wef 01 Apr 23</i>			
2	£22,366	£11.59	£23,656	£12.26
3	£22,737	£11.79	£24,027	£12.45
4	£23,114	£11.98	£24,404	£12.65
5	£23,500	£12.18	£24,790	£12.85
6	£23,893	£12.38	£25,183	£13.05
7	£24,294	£12.59	£25,584	£13.26
8	£24,702	£12.80	£25,992	£13.47
9	£25,119	£13.02	£26,409	£13.69
10	£25,545	£13.24	£26,835	£13.91
11	£25,979	£13.47	£27,269	£14.13
12	£26,421	£13.69	£27,711	£14.36
13	£26,873	£13.93	£28,163	£14.60
14	£27,334	£14.17	£28,624	£14.84
15	£27,803	£14.41	£29,093	£15.08
16	£28,282	£14.66	£29,572	£15.33
17	£28,770	£14.91	£30,060	£15.58
18	£29,269	£15.17	£30,559	£15.84
19	£29,777	£15.43	£31,067	£16.10
20	£30,296	£15.70	£31,586	£16.37
21	£30,825	£15.98	£32,115	£16.65
22	£31,364	£16.26	£32,654	£16.93
23	£32,076	£16.63	£33,366	£17.29
24	£33,024	£17.12	£34,314	£17.79
25	£33,945	£17.59	£35,235	£18.26
26	£34,834	£18.06	£36,124	£18.72
27	£35,745	£18.53	£37,035	£19.20
28	£36,648	£19.00	£37,938	£19.66
29	£37,336	£19.35	£38,626	£20.02
30	£38,223	£19.81	£39,513	£20.48
31	£39,186	£20.31	£40,476	£20.98
32	£40,221	£20.85	£41,511	£21.52
33	£41,418	£21.47	£42,708	£22.14
34	£42,403	£21.98	£43,693	£22.65
35	£43,421	£22.51	£44,711	£23.17
36	£44,428	£23.03	£45,718	£23.70
37	£45,441	£23.55	£46,731	£24.22
38	£46,464	£24.08	£47,754	£24.75
39	£47,420	£24.58	£48,710	£25.25
40	£48,474	£25.13	£49,764	£25.79
41	£49,498	£25.66	£50,788	£26.32
42	£50,512	£26.18	£51,802	£26.85
43	£51,515	£26.70	£52,805	£27.37

NB: hourly rate calculated by dividing annual salary by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) and then divided by 37 hours (the standard working week)

Part 3 Paragraph 2.6(e) Sleeping-in Duty Payment:

**1 April 2024**  
£41.78

**RATES OF PROTECTED ALLOWANCES AT 1 APRIL 2024  
(FORMER APT&C AGREEMENT (PURPLE BOOK))**

**Paragraph 28(3) Nursery Staffs in Educational Establishments - Special Educational Needs Allowance**

**1 April 2024**  
£1,491

**Paragraph 28(14) Laboratory / Workshop Technicians**

City and Guilds Science Laboratory Technician's Certificate Allowance:

**1 April 2024**  
£243

City and Guilds Laboratory Technician's Advanced Certificate Allowance:

**1 April 2024**  
£175

**Paragraph 32 London Weighting and Fringe Area Allowances £ Per Annum**

Inner Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**  
£1,013

Outer Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**  
£706

**Paragraph 36 Standby Duty Allowance - Social Workers (1)(a)(i) Allowance - Per Session**

**1 April 2024**  
£33.63

**FORMER MANUAL WORKER AGREEMENT (WHITE BOOK)**

**Section 1 Paragraph 3 London and Fringe Area Allowances £ Per Annum**

Inner Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**

£1,013

Outer Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**

£706

This page is intentionally left blank

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>5OMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 3</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS</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 revenue and capital outturns as well as treasury position at the end of quarter 3 2024/25.

**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 3, 2024/25 is shown in **Appendix A**. Net costs of TVFCS for quarter 3 are shown in **Appendix B**.

3.2 The 2024/25 Revenue Budget agreed by Fire Authority in February 2024 was set at £45.964m. The budget was set with no addition to or need to draw on the Budget Contingency Reserve.

3.3 The forecast revenue outturn for 2024/25 is shown in **Appendix A** and shows an anticipated surplus of £120,000 compared to the original budget. Variances against individual revenue lines are explained below.

3.4 *Employee costs.* The Grey book staff reached a pay settlement from 1 July 2024 of 4%. This was against a budget rate of 3.75% - at an additional cost of £39,000. The budget was set with the crewing model that included a buffer of an additional ten firefighters. Station staff salary costs have been less than

## Agenda Item 12

budgeted for the period, even with the 17 new recruits that joined in February (who went to stations in May), due to the number of leavers and retirements. The 18 new recruits taken on in July have joined stations in November – at which point stations were at establishment (including the crewing buffer of 10 additional firefighters budgeted). The proportion of firefighters in development is higher than in the budget. Overall, there is a forecast net cost savings on station salaries of around £473,000.

- 3.4.1 The overtime budget was set at a lower level, in anticipation that the implementation of Priority Project 6 (of CRMP) and the additional ten firefighter buffer would help lead to reduced overtime. The delay in the implementation of Priority 6, the time taken to recruit additional firefighters and pressure on the overtime budget to cover sickness, firefighters on light duties and additional overtime for training has had an impact on overtime costs. The overtime forecast is showing at £566,000 over budget for the year.
- 3.4.2 On-call stations are currently showing a net negative variance across the county, with a net variance of £92,000, with Lambourn being £38,000 of this amount.
- 3.4.3 The Green book pay award was finalised at an average of 3.38% against the budget of 3.75% - an estimated saving against the budget of £33,000. This is part of the Non-Stations Employee forecast underspend of £58,000, which includes various vacancies, but is partly offset by higher officer overtime.
- 3.5 *Utilities* – Reductions in gas and electricity prices are anticipated to save around £26,000 against the original budget. In addition, credits of £25,000 have been received from the water supply company due to corrections to meter readings.
- 3.6 *Occupational Health* – Costs are forecast to be £46,000 higher than budget due to cost increases, additional number of wholetime staff with additional medicals, increased numbers of referrals – particularly of complex cases needing physician rather than adviser appointments. Referrals for mental health cases have also risen.
- 3.7 *Contracts* – The forecast overspend includes internal and external audit costs forecast to be a total of £37,000 higher than budgeted.
- 3.8 *Vehicle running costs* – These costs are forecast to be £25,000 higher than forecast due to increased costs on the Hampshire Fleet contract, partly offset by lower fuel and diesel costs.
- 3.9 *Pension costs* – £35,000 higher due to additional Injury award costs.
- 3.10 *Grants* – The main variance relates to the Pension Grant to cover additional pension costs, which has come in £87,000 higher than budgeted.
- 3.11 *Interest receivable* — We have been able to invest at higher fixed rates with current and anticipated interest from money on deposit forecast to yield around £820,000 for the full year.

## **Capital**

- 3.12 Capital expenditure to quarter 3 and supporting commentary for each respective scheme is shown in **Appendix C**.

## **Treasury**

- 3.13 Treasury management activity for quarter 3 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 *Sustainability:* We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The forecast outturn position on the Revenue Account is expected to be a surplus of £120,000.

## **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 Budget setting assumptions that feed into the Medium-Term Financial Plan were reviewed and approved by Fire Authority.
- 8.2 Regular monitoring of expenditure against budgets helps ensure that resources are matched to need.

## **9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Environmental sustainability considerations are built into every capital project and the revenue implications of those projects is factored into the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

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

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

## **11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 The Chief Fire Officer has noted the contents of the report.

## Agenda Item 12

### **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 Agenda and Minutes, Royal Berkshire Authority: 15 February 2024

### **13. APPENDICES**

13.1 Appendix A – Revenue position at quarter 3, 2024/25

13.2 Appendix B – Net costs of TVFCS quarter 3, 2024/25

13.3 Appendix C – Capital position at quarter 3, 2024/25

13.4 Appendix D – Treasury position at quarter 3, 2024/25

### **14. CONTACT DETAILS**

14.1 Mark Hawkins

Finance Manager

[hawkinsm@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:hawkinsm@rbfrs.co.uk)

14.2 Conor Byrne

Head of Finance and Procurement

[byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk)

	Annual Budget £'000	Q1, Q2 & Q3 Outturn £'000	Forecast to YE £'000	Fcast - Budget Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>				
STATIONS	20,743	15,420	20,783	40
NON-STATIONS	14,596	10,773	14,538	(58)
TRAINING	776	446	795	19
OTHER	309	248	324	15
	<b>36,424</b>	<b>26,887</b>	<b>36,440</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PREMISES</b>				
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	1,002	702	1,047	45
RATES	968	850	971	3
CLEANING	294	219	304	10
UTILITIES	735	447	684	(51)
	<b>2,999</b>	<b>2,218</b>	<b>3,006</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SUPPLIES</b>				
INSURANCE	437	437	444	7
EQUIPMENT	646	348	671	25
IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES	1,003	741	1,048	45
CLOTHING/PPE	373	250	380	7
COMMUNICATIONS	913	661	932	19
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	268	227	314	46
PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS	142	108	159	17
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES	149	93	149	0
SUPPLIES OTHER	249	192	267	18
	<b>4,180</b>	<b>3,057</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>CONTRACTS</b>				
CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS	1,063	778	1,057	(6)
LEGAL	50	41	51	1
OTHER CONTRACTS (incl. Professional Services)	1,171	703	1,222	51
	<b>2,284</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>2,330</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>				
VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS	796	523	821	25
TRAVEL	232	189	250	18
	<b>1,028</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>PENSIONS</b>				
PENSIONS	518	379	553	35
	<b>518</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
GRANTS	(1,769)	(1,621)	(1,870)	(101)
RENTAL INCOME	(239)	(167)	(220)	19
TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME	(429)	(322)	(429)	0
INCOME OTHER	(544)	(142)	(553)	(9)
	<b>(2,981)</b>	<b>(2,252)</b>	<b>(3,072)</b>	<b>(91)</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>44,452</b>	<b>32,523</b>	<b>44,692</b>	<b>240</b>
DEBT CHARGES INTEREST	333	167	333	0
INVESTMENT INTEREST	(467)	(620)	(820)	(353)
REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL	1,847	0	1,847	0
APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES	(751)	0	(751)	0
FINANCING COSTS	550	0	550	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>45,964</b>	<b>32,070</b>	<b>45,851</b>	<b>(113)</b>
GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS	(45,964)	(40,174)	(45,971)	(7)
<b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT BEFORE USE OF RESERVES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(8,104)</b>	<b>(120)</b>	<b>(120)</b>

This page is intentionally left blank

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
 Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

	Annual Budget £'000	Outturn to December 2024 £'000	Forecast to Y/E £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	2,108	1,571	2,084	(24)
<b>CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFRS</b>	429	322	429	0
<b>SUPPLIES/ OTHER</b>	50	(10)	52	2
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	287	220	291	4
<b>NET COST OF TVFCS</b>	<b>2,874</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>2,856</b>	<b>(18)</b>
<b>RBFRS Share of Costs (37%)</b>	1,063	778	1,057	(6)

This page is intentionally left blank

Project Owner	Active Capital Projects	Total Project Budget £000's A	Spend in Prior Years £000's B	Spend in 2024/25 to Dec 24 £000's C	Estimated spend for remainder of 2024/25 £000's D	Total anticipated spend in 2024/25 £000's E	Estimated Project Spend to Completion £000's F- B-C-D	Total Estimated Project Spend £000's F	Overall variance on Project	Estimated Project Completion Date	Commentary
Estates Development Programme	Training Centre	3,860	349	1,732	1,316	3,048	463	3,860	0	Q1 25/26	The modular building is installed and is being fitted out ready for use. The anticipated hand over is by the end of March 2025.
	Slough refurbishment	780	415	335	30	365	0	780	0	Q3 24/25	Both projects have been completed. Only final account payments and retentions remain.
	Water Rescue - Slough	122	3	106	13	119	0	122	0	Q3 24/25	
	LED Lighting	225	0	0	225	225	0	225	0	Q4 24/25	Project substantially completed by mid january 2025 - only snagging and an area of Caverham Road to be completed.
	Sustainability - Heat Decarbonisation	1,770	0	128	39	167	1,603	1,770	0	Q4 26/27	Change request to Salix Finance approved, with no impact on the level of grant. There will be an increase in the level of funding required from RBFRS, which will be taken to Management Committee for decision.
	Minor Capital Works	171	0	3	111	114	57	171	0	Q1 25/26	This includes EDI and LED lighting at Windsor, EDI and contaminants upgrades at Wokingham and fire alarm upgrades at Lambourn and Mortimer.
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>6,928</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>2,304</b>	<b>1,734</b>	<b>4,038</b>	<b>2,123</b>	<b>6,928</b>	<b>0</b>		
Fleet & equipment	White Fleet (including EV vehicle)	711	533	195	0	195	0	728	17	Q2 24/25	All the vehicles for the year have been delivered. The extra cost was due to VAT not being reclaimable on some vehicles.
	6 Light Vans	220	0	0	160	160	60	220	0	Q1 25/26	Orders have been placed for 6 additional light vehicles. Fit out will be completed in Q1 25.26
	Appliances	2,664	0	525	474	999	1,665	2,664	0	Q1 26/27	The first 3 of 8 Appliances are currently being built and ancillary equipment is being purchased for the trucks. The first 3 are in build with project delivery by the end of March 2025
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>3,595</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>1,354</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>3,612</b>	<b>17</b>		
ICT	Network Refresh (WAN)	394	0	0	343	343	0	343	-51	Q1 25/26	A new contract has now been signed. The project includes upfront fees for installation and costs for 10 yrs licensing and support.
	Network Refresh (WAN) - 10 year licences	519	0	0	586	586	0	586	67		
	Software - Firewatch Development	50	12	0	10	10	28	50	0	Q4 25/26	Development of the host environment taking place in Q4
	Fireground Radio Replacement	136	0	122	14	136	0	136	0	Q3 24/25	Project completed
	Station End Refresh	67	0	66	0	66	0	66	-1	Q3 24/25	Project completed

Project Owner	Active Capital Projects	Total Project Budget £000's	Spend in Prior Years £000's	Spend in 2024/25 to Dec 24 £000's	Estimated spend for remainder of 2024/25 £000's	Total anticipated spend in 2024/25 £000's	Estimated Project Spend to Completion £000's	Total Estimated Project Spend £000's	Overall variance on Project	Estimated Project Completion Date	Commentary
	Hardware - Laptops phase 1	107	0	107	0	107	0	107	0	Q1 24/25	Phase 1 has been completed.
	Hardware - Laptops / desktops, etc	361	0	0	272	272	89	361	0	Q4 24/25	Purchasing has started
	Service /Delivery	192	0	0	64	64	128	192	0	Q1 25/26	Softacat - Azure implementation by 31.3.2025
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>1,841</b>	<b>15</b>		
TVFCS	DS3000 technical refresh (ICCS)	242	0	144	98	242	0	242	0	Q4 24/25	Project completed and final payments being made in Q4 2024.25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12,591</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>3,463</b>	<b>3,755</b>	<b>7,218</b>	<b>4,093</b>	<b>12,623</b>	<b>32</b>		

Appendix C  
Agenda Item 12

# Treasury Management Update – Q3 2024/25

## 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 Q3 2024/25, total debt remaining at £8,922k.

	<b>2024/25 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position at 31 Dec 2024 (£000's)</b>
Debt	8,922	8,922

## Investment Portfolio

The Authority held investments totalling £17.54m at 31 December 2024.

Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to maintain Bank Rate at 4.75% in their December 2024 meeting.

The three fixed term deposits totalling £7m that matured on the 12 December 2024 were reinvested for a further two months with maturity dates of the 12 Feb 2025. The total amount held in call accounts is a sum of £10.54m as at 31 December 2024.

The Authority continues to closely monitor liquidity needs and invests to provide flexibility where needed.

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix D

The budget for interest earnings for 2024/25 is £467,000. With the investments placed, as outlined above, the actual interest earned as at the 31 December 2024 was £620,000.

## 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 31 December 2024, the Authority has complied with the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25. 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>2024/25 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>31 Dec 2024 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2024/25 (£000's)</b>
Authorised Limit for external debt	16,535	16,535	16,535
Operational boundary for external debt	14,535	14,535	14,535
Gross external debt	8,922	8,922	8,922

<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing</b>	<b>31 Dec 2024 Actual (£000's)</b>
Under 12 months	394
12 months to 24 months	0
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>2024/25 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>31 Dec 2024 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2024/25 (£000's)</b>
Capital expenditure	9,225	3,463	7,218
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	9,535	n/a	9,200
Annual change in CFR	(550)	n/a	(885)
In-year borrowing requirement	0	0	0
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	1.71%	1.71%	1.71%

This page is intentionally left blank

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>QUARTER THREE APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 14, 15 &amp; 16</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>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 three performance with a supporting narrative on the whole-time duty system, on-call duty system, and combined appliance availability.
- 1.2 Whole-time availability across the quarter was 96.7% against a target of 97.4%. This is a 1.5 percentage point improvement in comparison to Q2.
- 1.3 On-call appliance availability through the quarter was 24.7% against a target of 50%. This represents a 10.8 percentage point decrease in comparison to Q2.
- 1.4 Baseline provision of 14 or more pumping appliances, including whole-time and on-call, was 82.6% against a target of 100%. This is an 11.9 percentage point improvement in performance compared to the 70.7% recorded in Q2. *[Performance against this measure is calculated based on whole shifts rather than minutes as with whole-time appliance availability].*
- 1.5 Against a corporate measure target of 75% of emergency incidents attended in 10 minutes, the Service achieved 73.2%.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the 2024/25 quarter three performance of **96.7%** appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances, in line with Corporate Measure 14<sup>1</sup>.

## Agenda Item 13

- 2.2 **NOTE** the 2024/25 quarter three overall on-call appliance availability performance of **24.7%**, in line with Corporate Measure 15<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.3 **NOTE** the 2024/25 quarter three performance of **82.6%** of shifts where 14 or more pumping appliances were available, in line with Corporate Measure 16<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. **REPORT**

#### **Response Standard:**

- 3.1 The performance against the response standard for Q3 was slightly below target with 73.2% of all incidents reached within 10 minutes of time of first emergency call being answered. This represents an improvement of 4.7 percentage points when compared to the Q2 performance, and a 1.7 percentage point improvement against the performance during Q3 last year.
- 3.2 The number of incidents in Q3, 1767, was substantially lower than the 2103 recorded in the previous quarter, which traditionally sees a peak in incidents associated with the summer months. The table below highlights both the lower incident demand at night, and the superior performance against the response standard. The lower incident demand and reduced traffic volume overnight can positively impact both call handling and travel times:

<b>Q3 2024</b>	<b>Average Incidents per hour</b>	<b>Response Standard Performance</b>
Day	1.0	72.5%
Night	0.7	73.8%

*Incident rates for day vs night including corresponding response performance.*

- 3.3 The Response Standard is made up of 3 constituent parts, the **call handling time**, the **turnout time**, and the **travel time**, with targets of 90 seconds each for call handling and turnout times, and seven minutes for travel time to make up the total 10-minute target.
- 3.4 The Authority, when setting the response standard, knew it was a stretching and ambitious target to reach 75% of incidents within 10-minutes because the measure is highly sensitive to incident volume and profile, and many rural parts of the county cannot be reached within the target seven minutes of travel time.

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

- 3.5 Call handling performance improved from 63.1% in target during Q2 to 70.3% in target during Q3. While this improvement can be attributed in part to the reduction in overall call volumes, the new approach to mobilising for Automatic Fire Alarms, discussed earlier this evening, may also be playing part. The Authority's decision to stop mobilising fire engines to some low and medium risk premises, introduced in September, has reduced the number of calls that require time-consuming call-challenge from control operators, which can improve call handling performance overall.
- 3.6 To help ensure call handling times are closely monitored, the TVFCS Joint Coordinating Group developed a suite of performance measures for control, which include a more detailed breakdown of call handling performance. This work has already enhanced our understanding of call handling performance and is helping us to understand trends with respect to call handling times by incident type.
- 3.7 Performance against target for turnout time in Q3 was 87.7%, which is good and consistent with overall performance in recent years. Times continue to be monitored internally to ensure any fluctuations in performance are appropriately managed.
- 3.8 Travel times in target rose from 66.7% in Q2 to 69.9% in Q3, driven by the reduction in call volumes highlighted above.
- 3.9 The Response Standard is an ambitious and stretching measure agreed by the Fire Authority and reports from the time the emergency call is received to the time of arrival on scene. For further context, it should be noted that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was the only fire and rescue service in England to improve its attendance times at primary fires over a ten-year period, improving our average speed of response by 22 seconds, as reported in 2022/23. All other fire and rescue services saw increased attendance times in the same period. From Home Office data for the 2023/24, we continue to perform above the average for England for most fire incident types in terms of attendance times.
- 3.10 The degradation of appliances is discussed below in more detail but it's impact on the response standard is worthy of note here because modelling shows that even with a single appliance degraded, we can see an impact between 0.6% and 4.5%. However, the factors that impact performance against the standard are numerous and complex so members should be aware that, even with improving availability, performance may still not meet the standard.
- 3.11 We will continue to closely monitor and manage our performance against the Response Standard, together with longer-term trends in our incident profile and demand. In addition to the detailed work on call handling, we will

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

## Agenda Item 13

continuously review the management of our resources via our internal Response Resourcing Group to ensure we are optimising our ability to respond as quickly as possible and explore opportunities in the longer-term that would support this objective.

### **Whole-time Duty System Appliance Availability**

- 3.12 This section of the report provides the 2024/25 quarter three performance update against Corporate Measure 14, which is the *percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability*. Overall availability for the quarter was 96.7% against a target of 97.4%.
- 3.13 RBFRS employ a lean operating model, including the Whole-time Duty System (WDS) provision. 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.
- 3.14 The leaver profile continues to present challenges in maintaining consistent establishment levels across our whole-time duty system. Whole-time leaver numbers during the past three financial years have averaged 36 per annum, or 11% of the establishment. The total number of leavers rose from four in Q2 to seven in Q3, which is still below the 17 that were predicted. The total number of leavers for the year is predicted to reach 34, which is fewer than the previous recorded maximum of 38 in 2022/23.
- 3.15 The arrival of 18 new apprentices on stations in November has more than offset the leavers for the quarter and the service has now filled the 10 additional posts that the Authority decided to recruit to last year. Due to the need for the apprentices to take leave accrued during the course of acquisition training, the full impact on availability of these additional firefighters will not be felt until January.
- 3.16 Very high demand for leave during December is a regular feature of Q3 that impacts staffing and reduces the availability of appliances, and this year saw at least one whole-time appliance degraded on 22 occasions. October also saw appliances degraded on 28 occasions which was driven by a peak in sickness among operational staff, which reached 9% for three weeks in that month.
- 3.17 The 10 additional firefighter posts that have now been filled should reduce the Service's reliance on overtime to maintain baseline service provision for Q4 onwards, and it is expected that we will see a reduction in the use of PAOT to cover shortages which should reduce the overspend, which is currently forecast to be £566,000.

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

3.18 By virtue of staff turnover during the past two years, the Service now has a significant proportion (38%) of whole-time 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.

**On-Call Duty System Appliance Availability**

3.19 The report also details performance against Corporate Measure 15, which sets a target of *50% 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 Q3 was 24.7%, 8.8 percentage points lower than the equivalent Q2 performance.

3.20 This performance is disappointing but continues to reflect the sensitivity of the on-call system. The table below provides year-on-year availability for the previous two financial years. Notably, since the Covid years, the 50% target for availability has not been met in any quarter, and availability has fluctuated from a high of 46.5% to the low of 24.7%.

Year	Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.
2024/25	34.1%	35.5%	24.7%	
2023/24	46.5%	38.4%	33.5%	41.5%
2022/23	44.4%	40.3%	35.9%	41.7%

*Year on year comparison*

3.21 The table below shows availability performance by quarter for the year-to-date. The reduction in availability at all stations apart from Crowthorne is worthy of note and discussed in the commentary that follows:

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

## Agenda Item 13

5. Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)					2024/25
Station	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Crowthorne	43.2%	51.7%	<b>51.6%</b>		48.9%
Hungerford	38.8	40.4%	<b>25.3%</b>		34.8%
Lambourn	3.7%	3.3%	<b>0.5%</b>		2.5%
Maidenhead	19.0%	25.7%	<b>9.3%</b>		18.0%
Mortimer	65.8%	56.5%	<b>36.7%</b>		52.9%

### *On Call fire engine availability by station*

- 3.22 As predicted in the Q2 availability report, the retirement of Hungerford's long-serving Watch Manager at the beginning of Q3 has significantly reduced availability at the station. On a positive note, a temporary Watch Manager has now been appointed and a new firefighter has become part of the critical crewing which should provide benefits. Further recruitment activities are planned for Q4 as part of ongoing efforts to boost firefighter numbers at the station.
- 3.23 Increasing Lambourn's availability continues to be challenging with the lack of a substantive supervisory manager. This, combined with a station strength of four, one of whom is still in the early stages of their training programme, means that we are unlikely to see any gains in availability until Q4, when whole-time staff will be used to supplement On-Call crews during the day when WDS crewing permits. The use of overtime to provide a qualified incident commander is being explored for the medium term and plans are underway to recruit a qualified Watch Manager to support management and crewing at the station.
- 3.24 Investment in recruitment at Crowthorne and development of staff is starting to pay dividends, with two months of Q3 seeing availability top 60%. Early signs are that Q4 could see further increases in availability.
- 3.25 Maidenhead's availability during Q3 has struggled to reach double figures, partly due to leave but also due to almost 40% of the on-call team's firefighters

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

being at the start of their careers and still in training. On a positive note, their development is gaining momentum, with an RTC course completed in Q3, and six booked on their BA course in Q4. It is anticipated that those six trainee firefighters will join the critical crew by the end of Q4, which should result in a significant improvement in availability from that point forward.

- 3.26 Availability at Mortimer was severely impacted by the sudden and unexpected unavailability of the Watch Manager due to illness in Q3. Availability plummeted from 62.10% at the start of Q3 to a low of 13.39% in November. A temporary replacement for the Watch Manager has now been appointed and work has been carried out to identify and develop a future leader, who is booked to attend an ICS L1 course in Q4; this should help to significantly improve availability at the station.
- 3.27 While Q3 has been a challenging period, the service welcomed three new recruits to the service, two for Crowthorne and one for Maidenhead, and it is expected that the trainee firefighters expected to become part of critical crewing in the coming months will begin to have a positive impact on availability in Q4 and into Q1 of 2025/26.

### **Combined Pumping Appliance Availability by Shift**

- 3.28 This section of the report provides the 2024/25 quarter three performance update against Corporate Measure 16. This is a new measure introduced this year to assist in monitoring our compliance with our CRMP commitment to ensure a baseline service provision of 14 pumping appliances. It sets a target of 100% for the availability of 14 or more pumping appliances. Overall availability for the quarter was 82.6%, significantly up from 70.1% in Q2.
- 3.29 It is worthy of note that On Call appliance availability is only included as contributing to the baseline provision where an entire shift is covered - even a single hour of unavailability can mean that the contribution of On Call appliances are not counted for the entire shift.
- 3.30 There were 14 WDS appliances available for 123 of the 184 shifts that occurred during Q3 which equates to 67%. When On Call appliances are taken into account for baseline service provision, the number of shifts with 14 or more appliances was 152 out of 184, or 82.6% of the shifts.
- 3.31 The table below shows performance against this measure across all shifts and broken down by day and night shifts. It is notable that performance is significantly better for nightshifts, where demand for PAOT is higher and On Call availability is better:

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

## Agenda Item 13

Shift	Total	x14 WDS available	x14+ WDS/OC available	% of shifts with x14+ available
All	184	123	152	82.6%
Day	92	56	69	75%
Night	92	67	83	90.2%

*Performance against CM16 overall and by day/night.*

- 3.32 It is also noteworthy that work is due to commence in January to address CRMP Priority Three: “...[to] develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents with Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to risks identified, sustainable and provides value for money.” The intention of P3 is to enhance the service that we deliver, and a significant part of that work will be to make sure that crewing models, ways of working, policies and procedures are all enhanced to ensure we have the right people with the right skills located to optimise our appliance availability and provide the most effective response.

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

##### 4.1 Commitment 3 – Response

We will ensure that our people are trained, and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The use of pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) continues to support a lean crewing model and to mitigate the effects of vacancies, sickness and absences for training.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Reliance on pre-arranged overtime to maintain appliance availability could lead to conflict with the following two clauses of the Grey Book:

*(25) Employees are free to volunteer to work pre-arranged overtime for no more than twenty-four hours per month, averaged over a six-month period.*

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

*(26) Pre-arranged overtime will not be used to make up any planned shortfall in the overall staffing levels set out in the fire and rescue authority's Integrated (Community) Risk Management Plan'*

**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. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

**10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

10.1 None identified.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 None

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Katie Mills, Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Director of Service Delivery

13.2 Tom Brandon, Area Manager, Response and Resilience

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 14: Percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability (fire engines).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 15: Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (fire engines).

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available (fire engines available for whole shifts).

This page is intentionally left blank

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Approve	MO	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
CRMP 6 evaluation	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	CRMP Lead	Part I
Culture Plan	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority meetings Consultation	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 25/26, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Finance Lead	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	17.03.25	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	TVFCS Chair	Part I
TVFCS Call Contract Award	TVFCS Joint Committee	17.03.25	Ad-hoc	Note and Recommend	AM C&P	TVFCS Chair	Part I
Scoping Workshop update	TVFCS Joint Committee	17.03.25	Ad-hoc	Note and Recommend	AM C&P	TVFCSChair	Part I
Lease changes	A&GC	24.03.25	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	N/A	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	24.03.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
TVFCS Contingency call handling - Contract Award	Management Committee	07.04.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	AM C&P	Cllr Frewer	Part II
Langley Refurbishment - Phase 2	Management Committee	07.04.25	Ad-hoc	Note	HoA	Strategic Assets and Sustainability	Part I
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Uplift	Management Committee	07.04.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part II
Corporate Calendar 2025/26	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I

This page is intentionally left blank

**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 16

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).

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank