



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

**Wednesday, 10th December, 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:** Wednesday, 10th December, 2025 at 6.30 pm

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

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## S U M M O N S

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

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

**GRAHAM BRITTEN**  
Monitoring Officer

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**To: Members of the 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 Wayne Smith	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Neil Knowles	

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

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## **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 7 October 2025 (Pages 5 - 16)**

Purpose:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 7 October 2025 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. CRMP Priority Programme Verbal Update**

Purpose:

To receive a verbal update on CRMP Priority Programme.

**8. 2025/26 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2 (Pages 17 - 30)**

Purpose:

To note the revenue and capital outturns as well as treasury position at the end of Quarter 2 2025/26.

**9. Appliance Availability - Quarter 2 (Pages 31 - 40)**

Purpose:

To note the Appliance Availability for Quarter 2.

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

Recommendation:

To note the Forward Plan.

**11. Date of next meeting**

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

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# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Tuesday, 7th October, 2025 at 6.30 pm

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

<b>Members:</b> (*present)	* Councillor George Blundell	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	* Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Dave McElroy
	* Councillor Paul Gittings	* Councillor Wayne Smith
	* Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Helen Taylor
	Councillor Wendy Griffith	* Councillor Simon Werner
	* Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	

**In Attendance:** Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
 Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
 Tom Brandon (Area Manager, Response and Resilience)  
 Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)  
 Paul Brooks (Head of Assets, HOA)  
 Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
 Dave Crease (Area Manager Prevention and Protection)  
 Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)  
 Paul Keenan (Group Manager Change and Improvement, GMC&I)  
 Frank Long (Group Manager, Intelligence and Risk, GMI&R)  
 Tim Readings (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy)  
 Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)  
 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)

## 20. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

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

## 21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors McKenzie-Boyle, Wendy Griffith, Dave McElroy and Helen Taylor.

**Action**

**22. 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 from Officers.

**23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 2025**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting on 14 July 2025, be approved as a true record to be signed the Chair.

**24. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Paying Respects to Rob Taylor, Chief Fire Officer of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Members paid their respects to Rob Taylor, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, who passed away following a short and sudden illness on Wednesday, 10 September.

**Annual Leave Consultation**

In support of delivering the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the Service is looking closely at the factors limiting appliance availability and exploring whether there are better ways to manage this.

The clear priority from this work is to keep 14 appliances on the run at all times, which is central to the Service's operational resilience and its commitment to serving our Berkshire communities.

This includes reviewing data and identifying practical changes that can be made to protect that operational resilience. One of the areas under review is the annual leave policy for operational (Grey Book) staff.

The Service is in an open dialogue with FBU colleagues, who have joined two recent workshops to discuss options and review evidence, and staff have been invited to give their views on this very emotive topic.

A draft leave policy will be published for staff consultation in October shaped by data collected, and feedback by staff and union representatives.

**State Visit by The President of the United States of America and First Lady, Melania Trump**

On Wednesday, 17 September, The President of the United States of America,

Donald Trump, and his wife First Lady, Melania Trump, visited Windsor Castle as guests of The King and Queen.

We are proud to have supported this State Visit by working with our partners at Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and the Royal Household to minimise the disruption to those who live and work in Windsor or planned to visit, while continuing to provide excellent response during incidents in our communities.

Thank you to all those involved in supporting the visit.

### Opening of New Learning and Development Centre

At the end of July, the new Learning and Development Centre in Whitley Wood was officially opened by Mr Andrew Try, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire, at a celebratory ceremony that was attended by many of you here today.

The brand new facility was designed by Premier Modular Limited, and boasts several important features with a focus on safety, wellbeing, and sustainability.

The building has been designed specifically to mitigate any contaminants that might be present during realistic training scenarios, and is outfitted with solar PV panels, LED lighting and electric car charging ports.

This fantastic new facility represents a significant investment by the Fire Authority into our staff, and will help prepare the Service to meet the changing needs of communities across Berkshire for years to come.

Members, please join me in thanking everyone who was involved in delivering this important project.

### Charity Car Washes at Wokingham Road

At the start of September, staff hosted a charity car wash at Wokingham Road Fire Station, in aid of The Fire Fighters Charity and MND Association Reading & West Berkshire.

With extra support from the Reading Joggers running club, they raised approximately £900 for the two charities.

Thank you and well done to all involved in raising money for these worthy causes.

### Fixed Wire Testing at Headquarters

Next week, the Service will be undertaking essential fixed wire testing here at Newsham Court.

To facilitate this necessary work, all staff – except for those supporting the testing and those from Thames Valley Fire Control Service – will be working remotely from the Service’s headquarters for a period next week.

The Service will be responding to incidents as normal while the testing is completed.

### Upcoming Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony for 2025 is fast approaching. This year’s event will take place from 7pm on Friday, 21 November at Select Car Leasing Stadium (home of Reading FC).

In addition to our Long Service recipients, recipients for 13 separate award categories will be announced on the night. Our Events Team is working hard to ensure that everything is prepared ready for a fitting celebration.

Invitations have been issued to all Members through their RBFRS email addresses. However, if you are unable to attend the event in person, we will be live streaming proceedings. A link to watch the event will be shared with you closer to the evening.

If you have registered to attend, but are no longer able to make it, we would appreciate if you can let us know by emailing [events@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:events@rbfrs.co.uk) or notifying Fayth Rowe.

### Members Charter of Support

We are currently seeking your views on the Fire Authority’s Charter of Support.

For those of you who may not have been part of the Authority when it was created, this is a charter that is displayed at all RBFRS sites, emphasising Fire Authority Members’ support for the culture of the Service.

The document was signed nearly two years ago and as part of good governance we would like you to review the content and identify any possible areas of improvement.

You should now have received a copy of the Charter by email. Please submit any comments or suggested improvements to Nikki Richards by Tuesday, 14 October, they will then be shared with me, as Chair, for review and consideration.

## Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, Announces Retirement

Lastly, I must give a dedicated mention to the announcement that our Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock, will be retiring from his role in March 2026, after 33 years of serving in the fire and rescue sector.

Wayne has overseen a hugely successful period for RBFRS, driving forward many key areas of focus for the benefit of our communities. It is a pleasure working with Wayne and his knowledge and experience has been extremely valuable to all Members of the Fire Authority.

With Wayne's announcement, a process to recruit our next Chief Fire Officer will begin in due course and we will of course, keep you updated.

On behalf of the Fire Authority and the people of Berkshire, I would like to thank Wayne for his dedicated service.

## 25. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

## 26. URGENT LATE ITEM - LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Chair reported the purpose of this paper was for Management Committee to agree the establishment of a cross-party Task and Finish Group to support the development of a robust, open and transparent selection process to attract the best candidates for the Chief Fire officer/Chief Executive.

The members of the cross-Party Task and Finish Group were Fire Authority Chair; Cllr Jeff Brooks, Vice-Chair; Cllr Paul Gittings and Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle. Together they will act as the Members' Appointment Panel for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive recruitment process.

This paper was also seeking Management Committee approval for a Member stakeholder panel to be formed to assist with the interview process.

The Chair moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor George Blundell.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) It be agreed a cross-party Task and Finish Group, as proposed in Appendix A, be established to oversee the process; and
- 2) It be agreed that the Members of the Task and Finish Group act as the Members' Appointment Panel for the CFO/CEX process; and
- 3) A Member Stakeholder panel will be formed to assist the interview

process.

**27. LIGHT VEHICLE URGENT OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT REPLACEMENT CAPITAL SPEND APPROVAL**

Paul Brooks, Head of Assets reported that, in July 2025, Management Committee approved the light fleet replacement programme for 2025 with a budget of £271,000 provided for in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF). This budget fell c22% below the total provision in the SAIF of £347,000.

Despite regular maintenance and inspection, a catastrophic engine failure to the water and animal rescue light vehicle has occurred meaning additional budget is required to replace this vehicle. The Fleet and Equipment team has been working hard to find a replacement vehicle of an equal specification, however the lead time for a brand-new asset via the procurement framework is 12-14 months. A suitable nearly new vehicle of the correct specification has been identified for procurement to meet the requirement. This would reduce the procurement timeline down to approximately three months. The procurement will be supported via the Royal Berkshire and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire Authorities Fleet Support Joint Working Agreement, highlighting another benefit offered by that cooperative arrangement.

This paper is seeking Management Committee approval to draw down the remaining capital provision for light fleet in the SAIF of up to £76,000 for the replacement of a critical light fleet asset.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The capital expenditure of up to £76,000 for the water and animal rescue light fleet asset as described in paragraph 3.4 be approved.

**28. SOLAR PV PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAGE 1 FEASIBILITY**

Paul Brooks, Head of Assets reported that the Authority aims to lower its environmental impact by reducing its carbon footprint and expenditure on utilities wherever it can. Notably, the estate contributes c65% of the Authority's carbon output. In support of this, the Fire Authority approved the £1.77M Sustainability Programme Phase 1 on 22 April 2024 to start to decarbonise five sites. Energy generation by roof mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at four of our sites is now being considered to further reduce our impact on the environment and improve energy efficiency.

Early cost-benefit analysis conducted on a pro bono basis by Laser, our professional consultants, indicates that an investment of £432,000 at four sites

would achieve annual savings of £65,000 with a return in investment over 6.8 to 7.3 years. He reported that this paper was seeking Management Committee approval for a three-stage approach to release £24,000 from the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) for professional services fees to fully investigate the feasibility of the installation of roof mounted solar PV at the most beneficial sites.

The Vice-Chair commented his full support of this paper. The Chair requested for table one [in the report] to be updated as the Authority improves its estate using solar technology.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) It be agreed the release of £24,000 from the SAIF for professional services fees to investigate the installation of roof mounted solar PV at RBFRS sites.
- 2) The public sector-compliant Laser Framework previously used for LED installation will be used to design, plan and deliver the project as programmed in the SAIF for 2026/2027 be noted.
- 3) It be noted there will be a further report presented to the Management Committee in February 2026 with details of the full project scope, including the return on investment and revenue opportunities.

## 29. ICT CAPITAL EXPENDITURE RELEASE

In referring to the table in paragraph 3.2 of the report, Lukasz Wrona, Head of Business Information Systems (HBIS) outlined the review of future needs and future provisions of hardware sought from the Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF). He reported the Fire Authority approved the SAIF at its meeting on 19 February 2025 and subject to Management Committee's approval the release of funds would be used to deliver planned ICT hardware replacement and integration programme.

The Chair asked whether a full analysis on how Tablets can improve productivity. Lukasz Wrona confirmed the laptops include the capacity to make mobile notes. He added that the ICT Strategy already includes this and will continue to be used by crews to complete Safe and Well visits.

The Chair suggested the next Members and Officers in January 2026 examine how different technologies could provide productivity gains.

DchEx

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The release of funds as set out in section 3.2 [of the report] to deliver the planned ICT hardware replacement and integration programme, totalling **£386,209.00** be approved.

**30. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) - VERBAL UPDATE**

Frank Long, Group Manager, Intelligence and Risk Performance Manager, provided an update on priorities 1, 2 and 5 of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). He provided a brief overview of the priorities below:

Priority 1: We will develop our Integrated Service Delivery Strategy to meet the changing profile of risk in Berkshire due to climate change, societal and technological shifts.

Priority 2: We will develop a Risk Based Prevention Programme to target those most vulnerable and at risk from emergency incidents.

Priority 5: We will develop our fire protection service to support the resilience of businesses, to ensure the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that our enforcement role is effective and clear.

He stated work had started on developing the new CRMP from 2027-2031. Officers were looking at identifying and clearly articulating risk to the Service and the communities we serve. As well as, how those risks will be mitigated with our resources. He reported priority 1 would help identify our methodology for how best we resource our prevention, protection and response work.

In referring to Priority 3, (*We will develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to the risks identified, sustainable and provides value for money* (RBFA CRMP 2023-27) he stated, the Leave Policy was a key part of P3 and was ongoing.

The Leave Policy consultation was due to open to Grey Book staff this weekend for 28 days. The Operation Support Intelligence Team (OSIT) were looking at ways of improving efficiency to further support appliance availability. Review of the Ariel Ladder Platform (ALP) crewing and impacts have commenced and a review of the Flexi Duty Officer rota and structure. The Specialist capability framework was tied into risk in terms of training and what and where those capabilities are required, this involves horizon scanning.

**31. 2025/26 BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER ONE**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HBIS), provided an update on Quarter One 2025/26 Budget Monitoring. He stated the 2025/26 Revenue Budget agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2025 was set at £47.965m. The budget was set with no addition to or need to draw on the Budget Contingency Reserve.

He reported the main variances related to Employee costs and outlined the Grey

book pay award from 1 July 2025 was agreed at 3.2%. The budget assumption was 2%, resulting in an additional spend pressure of £229,000, however reserves were set aside to meet costs. In addition, Green book pay award was finalised at 3.2% comparing to a budget assumption of 2%, resulting in an additional spend pressure of £115,000. Reserves were also set aside to meet these costs.

He stated due to the under establishment in quarter one and pressure on the overtime budget to cover sickness, firefighters on light duties and additional overtime for training, the overtime showed £305,000 over budget for the year.

On-call stations showed a net negative variance across the county, with a net variance of £168,000, with Lambourn being £57,000 of this amount.

The costs on PPE contract is anticipated to be higher than budget by £28,00 for the year and in referring to the *Income other* budget line, Conor Byrne stated £58,000 had been received on an un-budgeted legal settlement.

The capital expenditure for the year and supporting commentary for each respective scheme is shown in Appendix C and Treasury management activity for quarter one is shown in Appendix D.

The Chair asked a question in relation to the overtime forecast. Conor Byrne reported due to the under establishment in quarter one and pressure on the overtime budget to cover sickness, firefighters on light duties and additional overtime training the overtime forecast is showing at £305,000 over budget for the year.

Councillor Werner queried whether Officers could have predicted a greater assumption when budgeting for the pay award. Conor Byrne explained pay negotiations are held nationally and is dependent on when they are actually agreed. There are a number of variations that has to be built into the assumption that looks reasonable at the time of budget setting.

The Chair explained the budget assumption for pay award was a challenge. Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer reported the National Joint Council (NJC) who negotiate pay award had a long standing agreement the pay award is based on inflation (CPI). In September 2024, when the budget was being set, it was 1.7%.

**RESOLVED** that report be noted.

### **32. QUARTER ONE APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 14, 15 AND 16**

Tom Brandon, Area Manager Response and Resilience reported the wholetime availability for quarter one was 96.7% against a target of 97.4%. This was a 1.4 percentage point reduction in comparison to quarter four. The on-call appliance

for the quarter was 34.3% against a target of 50%.

The baseline provision of 14 or more pumping appliances, including wholetime and on-call, was 90,1% against a target of 100%. He stated this was similar to the 91.2% recorded during quarter one in the previous year.

The response standard target of 75% of emergency incidents attended in 10 minutes of service achieved 71%, this was below target. He added that when the Authority set the Response Standard, it was a stretching and ambitious target. He explained the measure was highly sensitive due to volume profile and parts of the county cannot be reached within the target 7 minutes of travel time.

The number of incidents in quarter, 1973, is a substantial increase compared to the 1748 recorded in the previous quarter. In referring to the table on the report, he stated the response standard is being met overnight but not during the day. The higher incident demand and increased traffic volume during the day can negatively impact both call handling and travel times.

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.

During quarter one station-based staff numbers began to dip below the budgeted level of 334 throughout the quarter which began to exert downward pressure on overall appliance availability. The arrival of 12 apprentices in July [quarter two] will improve station based staff when leave and operational demand peak during August.

In referring to on-call availability, he reported the unavailability of three managers at Hungerford for a prolonged period in quarter one had a negative impact on availability.

Lambourn's availability continues to be challenging with the lack of a substantive supervisory manager. However, a new recruit at the station is expected to take on a supervisory role during quarter two and it is expected an improvement will be seen.

Maidenhead's availability during the quarter improved significantly following two firefighters passing the crew manager process and becoming available to provide incident command skills for the station. The progression of six trainees becoming part of critical crewing is expected to further improve availability in quarter two.

Mortimer has continued to improve. The new temporary watch manager led the station to achieve 55.7% in quarter one for quarter one – a significant achievement considering the station hit a low of 13.9% during November in 24/25 (quarter three).

There were 14 WDS appliances available for 134 of the 182 shifts that occurred during quarter one which equates to 73.6%. When On Call appliances are taken into account for baseline service provision, the number of shifts with 14 or more appliances was 164 out of 182, or 90.1% of the shifts.

Of the 18 shifts overnight where a wholetime appliance was unavailable during quarter one, 15 were supported with On Call availability which enabled the baseline provision of 14 appliances to be achieved for 96.7% of nightshifts.

In response to a question by the Chair on whether RBFRS could maintain the on-call performance at 35%, Tom Brandon stated he was optimistic about Lambourn and the trend was positive for Maidenhead, however it will only take one to two individuals to transfer to wholetime which would make a significant impact to availability. He stated that key pieces of work was ongoing, for example the proposed Leave Policy would maintain appliances which would reduce the Service's over reliance on pre-arranged overtime (PAOT).

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) It be noted the 2024/25 quarter one performance of **96.7%** appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances, in line with Corporate Measure 14<sup>1</sup>.
- 2) It be noted the 2024/25 quarter one performance of **34.3%** overall on-call appliance availability in line with Corporate Measure 15<sup>2</sup>.
- 3) It be noted the 2024/25 quarter one performance of **90.1%** of shifts where 14 or more pumping appliances were available, in line with Corporate Measure 16<sup>3</sup>.

### **33. FORWARD PLAN**

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

### **34. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

*(The meeting concluded at 19:36)*

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 DECEMBER 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>2025/26 BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 2</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 2 2025/26.

**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 2, 2025/26 is shown in **Appendix A**. Net costs of TVFCS for quarter 2 are shown in **Appendix B**.
- 3.2 The 2025/26 Revenue Budget agreed by Fire Authority in February 2025 was set at £47.965m. The budget was set with no addition to or need to draw on the Budget Contingency Reserve.
- 3.3 The forecast revenue outturn for 2025/26 is shown in **Appendix A** and shows overall expenditure to be in line with budget. Variances against individual revenue lines are explained below.
- 3.4 *Employee costs* - The Grey book pay award from 1 July 2025 has been agreed at 3.2%. This compares to a budget assumption of 2%, resulting in an additional spend pressure of £229,000 over the original budget – however reserves were set aside to meet these costs and have been added to the

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budget for 2025/26. The Stations budget was set to include a buffer of an additional ten firefighters, however the actual numbers of staff on wholetime stations were below the budgeted number in quarter 1. The 12 new recruits that joined in February 2025 are now all on stations from the end of June 2025. The proportion of firefighters at development level is higher than in the budget. There is a forecast salary cost saving of around £240,000 on wholetime stations for the year.

- 3.5 Due to the under establishment in quarter 1 and pressure on the overtime budget to cover sickness, firefighters on light duties and additional overtime for training, the overtime forecast is showing at £390,000 over budget for the year.
- 3.6 On-call stations are currently showing a net negative variance across the county, with a net variance of £93,000, with Lambourn being £55,000 of this amount.
- 3.7 The Green book pay award has now been finalised, similarly at 3.2%. This compares to a budget assumption of 2%, resulting in an additional spend pressure of £115,000. Reserves were set aside to meet these costs and have been added to the budget for 2025/26. Vacancies in various departments has resulted in a net variance of £278,000.
- 3.8 *Clothing and PPE* – The costs on the PPE contract are anticipated to be higher than budget by £30,000 for the year.
- 3.9 *Communications* – the Home Offices charges for the Airwave system are forecast to be £289,000 less than budget.
- 3.10 *Other Suppliers* – includes additional costs of £8,000 for hydrant repairs.
- 3.11 *Cross border* – costs (included in *Other Contracts*) are forecast to be £14,000 higher, and income (in *Income other*) £16,000 higher.
- 3.12 *Income other* – includes £58,000 received on an un-budgeted legal settlement.
- 3.13 *Appropriations to Reserves* – the use of reserves to cover the unbudgeted elements of the pay awards has been adjusted to take into account the favourable variances for the year. Use of reserves is £408,000 less than budget.

### **Capital**

- 3.14 Capital expenditure for the year and supporting commentary for each respective scheme is shown in **Appendix C**.

### **Treasury**

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

**4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 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 equal the budget without the planned use of reserves.

**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.

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 Agenda and Minutes, Royal Berkshire Authority: 19 February 2025

**13. APPENDICES**

- 13.1 Appendix A – Revenue position at quarter 2 2025/26

- 13.2 Appendix B – Net costs of TVFCS quarter 2 2025/26

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13.3 Appendix C – Capital position at quarter 2 2025/26

13.4 Appendix D – Treasury position at quarter 2 2025/26

### **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	Q2 Outturn £'000	Forecast to YE £'000	Fcast - Budget Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>				
STATIONS	22,033	11,088	22,090	57
NON-STATIONS	15,913	7,682	15,635	(278)
TRAINING	707	252	709	2
OTHER	342	176	355	13
	<b>38,995</b>	<b>19,198</b>	<b>38,789</b>	<b>(206)</b>
<b>PREMISES</b>				
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	814	381	832	18
RATES	988	579	988	0
CLEANING	299	136	311	12
UTILITIES	587	245	587	0
	<b>2,688</b>	<b>1,341</b>	<b>2,718</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>SUPPLIES</b>				
INSURANCE	438	265	438	0
EQUIPMENT	580	263	591	11
IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES	1,252	727	1,266	14
CLOTHING/PPE	423	226	453	30
COMMUNICATIONS	937	163	636	(301)
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	348	212	348	0
PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS	140	110	159	19
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES	110	47	121	11
SUPPLIES OTHER	228	135	257	29
	<b>4,456</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>4,269</b>	<b>(187)</b>
<b>CONTRACTS</b>				
CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS	1,128	555	1,123	(5)
LEGAL	50	31	50	0
OTHER CONTRACTS (incl. Professional Services)	1,154	1,085	1,171	17
	<b>2,332</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>2,344</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>				
VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS	825	432	844	19
TRAVEL	225	146	236	11
	<b>1,050</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>PENSIONS</b>				
PENSIONS	510	266	510	0
	<b>510</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
GRANTS	(1,929)	(1,493)	(1,933)	(4)
RENTAL INCOME	(264)	(131)	(264)	0
TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME	(456)	(228)	(456)	0
INCOME OTHER	(526)	(585)	(601)	(75)
	<b>(3,175)</b>	<b>(2,437)</b>	<b>(3,254)</b>	<b>(79)</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>46,856</b>	<b>22,765</b>	<b>46,456</b>	<b>(400)</b>
DEBT CHARGES INTEREST	329	127	329	0
INVESTMENT INTEREST	(604)	(269)	(598)	6
REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL	1,516		1,516	0
APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES	(675)		(267)	408
FINANCING COSTS	543		543	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>47,965</b>	<b>22,623</b>	<b>47,979</b>	<b>14</b>
GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS	(47,965)	(28,634)	(47,979)	(14)
<b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT BEFORE USE OF RESERVES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(6,011)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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	Annual Budget £'000	Outturn to September 25 £'000	Forecast to Y/E £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	2,246	1,115	2,239	(7)
<b>CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFRS</b>	455	228	455	0
<b>SUPPLIES/ OTHER</b>	11	(14)	11	0
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	295	150	289	(6)
<b>NET COST OF TVFCS</b>	<b>3,007</b>	<b>1,479</b>	<b>2,994</b>	<b>(13)</b>
<b>RBFRS Share of Costs (37.5%)</b>	1,128	555	1,123	(5)

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Project Owner	Active Capital Projects	Total Project Budget £000's	Spend in Prior Years £000's	Budgeted spend in 2025/26 £000's	Spend in Q1 & Q2 2025/26 £000's	Estimated Project Spend to Completion £000's	Total Estimated Project Spend £000's	Overall variance on Project F - A	Estimated Project Completion Date	Commentary
		A	B	C	F- B-C	F	F - A			
Estates Development Programme	L & D Training Centre	3,860	3,367	493	264	229	3,860	0	Q3 25/26	The main training centre modular building was completed in March 2025 and was in use from April 2025. The official Opening Ceremony was on Friday July 25th 2025. Final invoicing for some areas of work, including retentions, was still outstanding at 30 September 2025.
	Sustainability - Heat Decarbonisation (Phase 1)	2,253	0	2,253	235	2,018	2,253	0	Q4 25/26	Delivery contract awarded to Corrigenda for a high-quality, good-value bid. Project delivery began at Caversham Rd Fire Station in August 25 and is progressing. No issues have been flagged by Salix. There will be partial funding of the contract by a PSDC grant of £928k.
	Solar	24	0	24	0	24	24	0	Q4 25/26	Management Committee on October 7th 2025 agreed to the release of £24,000 for professional service fees to investigate the installation of roof mounted solar PV at RBFRS sites.
	Langley	950	0	150	18	932	950	0	Q4 25/26	Feasibility and concept design work has commenced and estimated cost figures will be brought to the Management Committee in due course.
	Windsor - EDI	95	0	95	0	95	95	0	Q4 25/26	Provision at Windsor fire station of a stand alone pod that will satisfy EDI requirements is progressing.
	Minor Capital Works	190	0	190	3	187	190	0	Q4 25/26	Minor capital works at Wokingham and Newsham Court were approved at Management Committee in July 2025
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>7,372</b>	<b>3,367</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>7,372</b>	<b>0</b>		
Fleet & Equipment	6 Light Vans	220	82	110	82	28	192	-28	Q3 25/26	Details of 3 outstanding vans: 1 L&D vehicle still in process unknown completion date at this time - 2 x hydrant vans in early stages of fitting will be available on time within Q3
	Light Fleet Replacement	347	0	347	0	347	347	0	Q4 25/26	Orders have been placed for 2 x standard large vans (second hand at a saving of 9k per van) and 1 x full electric transit Direct (we used local main dealer - attracting an 8k saving, compared to using the framework). The replacement Water & Animal rescue vehicle has also been sourced and a PO raised.
	Appliances	2,664	1,602	1,062	250	812	2,664	0	Q4 25/26	First 3 appliances complete and all three vehicles have been on the run for since August 2025. Expect receipt of vehicles from supplier in January 2026.
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>3,231</b>	<b>1,684</b>	<b>1,519</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>3,203</b>	<b>-28</b>		
ICT	Network Refresh (WAN)	394	0	410	0	410	410	16	Q4 25/26	Work has not progressed as anticipated , due to supplier issues.
	Network Refresh (WAN) - 10 year licences	519	0	519	0	519	519	0		
	Software - Firewatch Development	50	12	12	0	26	38	-12	Q4 25/26	Development of the host environment, together with interfacing requirements for the RDS project. Will not be used up this FY.
	Hardware - Laptops / desktops, etc	361	49	312	0	312	361	0	Q4 25/26	Purchasing has started and futher equipment will be purchased as required, £110K order being placed for laptops followed by £34k for monitors.
	Services /Delivery	80	0	80	0	80	80	0	Q4 25/26	Will be used for system integration and enhancements
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,347</b>	<b>1,408</b>	<b>4</b>		
TVFCS	TVFCS Replacement Project - Phase1	213	0	213	11	125	136	-77	Q4 25/26	Unspent budget will be required for future years
	EISEC servers	4	0	4	0	4	4	0	Q4 25/26	EISEC upgrades have been received and installed, final testing to be done with invoicing in Q3.
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>-77</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12,224</b>	<b>5,112</b>	<b>6,274</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>6,148</b>	<b>12,123</b>	<b>-101</b>		

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# Treasury Management Update – Q2 2025/26

## Background

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

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

## Borrowing

The Authority's debt position was unchanged in Q2 2025/26, £394k was repaid in Q1, reducing total debt to £8,528k.

	<b>2025/26 Opening Position (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 Sept 2025 (£000's)</b>
Debt	8,922	8,528

## Investment Portfolio

The Authority held a sum of £10.88m in call accounts at 30 September 2025.

At the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on 6 of August 2025 a majority of 5-4 voted to reduce Bank Rate by 0.25 percentage points, to 4% rather than maintaining the rate at 4.25%

At 17 September 2025 meeting, the MPC voted by a majority to maintain Bank Rate at 4%.

A sum of £4m was invested on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 across two counterparties with good rates in line with our investment strategy, for the duration of

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six months each based on cashflow needs. The Authority continues to closely monitor liquidity needs and invests to provide flexibility where needed.

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

## Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the Authority to determine and keep under review its affordable borrowing limits. During the quarter ended 30 September 2025, the Authority has complied with the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26. 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>2025/26 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>30 Sept 2025 Actual (£000's)</b>
Authorised Limit for external debt	13,720	13,720
Operational boundary for external debt	11,720	11,720
Gross external debt	8,922	8,528

<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing</b>	<b>30 Sept 2025 Actual (£000's)</b>
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>8,528</b>

<b>Prudential Indicators</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>30 Sept 2025 Actual (£000's)</b>
Capital expenditure	6,274	863
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	11,020	11,020
Annual change in CFR	(543)	(543)
In-year borrowing requirement	2,500	0
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	1.63%	1.63%

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 DECEMBER 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>QUARTER TWO APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 14, 15 &amp; 16</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>TOM BRANDON, 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**

This report provides information on quarter two performance with a supporting narrative on the whole-time duty system, on-call duty system, and combined appliance availability.

Whole-time availability across the quarter was 96.3% against a target of 97.4%. This is a 1.1 percentage point improvement in comparison to the same period last year.

On-call appliance availability was 32.8% against a target of 50%.

Baseline provision of 14 or more pumping appliances during Q2, including whole-time and on-call, was 84.8% against a target of 100%. *[Performance against this measure is calculated based on whole shifts rather than minutes as with whole-time appliance availability].*

Against a corporate measure target of 75% of emergency incidents attended in 10 minutes, the Service achieved 67.3%.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the 2024/25 quarter two performance of **96.3%** appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances, against a target of 97.4%, in line with Corporate Measure 14<sup>1</sup>.

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- 2.2 **NOTE** the 2024/25 quarter two overall on-call appliance availability performance of **32.8%**, against a target of 50%, in line with Corporate Measure 15<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.3 **NOTE** the 2024/25 quarter two performance of **84.8%** of shifts where 14 or more pumping appliances were available, against a target of 100%, in line with Corporate Measure 16<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. **REPORT**

#### **Response Standard:**

- 3.1 The performance against the response standard for Q2 was below target with 67.3% of all incidents reached within 10 minutes of time of first emergency call being answered.
- 3.2 Quarter two traditionally presents the greatest challenge for the fire service in terms of incident demand and this year was consistent with that profile. An exceptionally dry spring preceding a hot, dry summer period saw 2025 break the previous record, set in 2022, to become the worst year ever for wildfires in England and Wales, with 996 recorded for the year to September.
- 3.3 The number of incidents attended in Berkshire in Q2, 2083, is a substantial increase compared to the 1973 recorded in the previous quarter. The table below highlights that performance against the response standard was particularly challenged during the day. The higher incident demand and increased traffic volume during the day can negatively impact both call handling and travel times particularly during periods with higher volumes of fires in the open which can be difficult to pinpoint by control and locate by crews:

<b>Q2 2025</b>	<b>Response Standard Performance</b>
Day	62.3%
Night	72.0%

*Response standard performance for day vs night*

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The Authority, when setting the response standard, knew it was a challenging ambition to reach 75% of incidents within 10-minutes because the measure is

<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).

highly sensitive to incident volume and profile, and many rural parts of the county, particularly in the west cannot be reached within the target seven minutes of travel time. Other than during 2019, the standard has not been met in any year, outside of those with Covid lockdown measures in place, since it was agreed in 2016.

- 3.6 Call handling performance improved slightly from 69.9% in target during Q1 to 70.9% in target during Q2, which is surprising given the substantial increase in incident numbers.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Performance against target for turnout time in Q2 was 87.6%, which is similar to the 88.2% recorded during the same period the previous year. Times continue to be monitored internally to ensure any fluctuations in performance are appropriately managed.
- 3.9 Travel times in target fell to 63.9% in Q2, a fall of 2.8 percentage points from the equivalent period last year which is consistent with the demand experienced during the hot, dry summer. Challenges with On-Call availability in West Berkshire are resulting in a reliance on Newbury to provide the first attendance into areas which would normally be serviced by Hungerford and Lambourn.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 The most recent MHCLG data, for 2024/25, shows that RBFRS continues to perform above average for most incident types:

<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).

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<b>Incident Category</b>	<b>RBFRS</b>	<b>English FRS average</b>
Primary Fire	00:08:44	00:09:06
Dwelling Fire	00:07:52	00:08:06
Other Building Fire	00:08:34	00:09:03
Road Vehicles	00:09:58	00:10:12
House Fire	00:07:58	00:08:36

### *MHCLG Response time data for 2024/25*

- 3.12 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 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**

- 3.13 This section of the report provides the 2025/26 quarter two performance update against Corporate Measure 14, which is the *percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability*. Overall availability for the quarter was 96.3% against a target of 97.4%.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 The arrival of a new cohort of apprentices on station came just in time to support WDS crewing for the busy summer period when leave and incident demand both peak.
- 3.16 Looking forward, the arrival of the new cohort of 12 apprentices in July will again list the number of station-based staff up to and slightly above the budgeted level in time for Q2 when leave and operational demand peak during August.

<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).

- 3.17 Sickness among station-based staff deteriorated from 5.8% in Q1 to 6.9% in Q2. While this is a disappointing reversal of a promising trend, management continue to prioritise supporting staff to return to the workplace and this work will continue.
- 3.18 Due of staff turnover during the past two years, the Service now has a significant proportion (37%) of whole-time operational staff in development roles. The training and assessment requirements add further pressure to the management of appliance availability. The operational support and improvement team now meets regularly with colleagues from learning and development to minimise the impacts of training and development on availability by planning and scheduling courses around other demands.
- 3.19 Despite high demand for leave and increased sickness and training requirements, improvements in management, and the Fire Authority’s addition of 10 firefighters, meant the number of WDS appliances unavailable for entire shifts due to crewing issues reduced from 98 during Q2 last year to 51 for the same period this year.

**On-Call Duty System Appliance Availability**

- 3.20 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 Q2 was 32.8%, 1.5 percentage points lower than the previous quarter.
- 3.21 The table below shows availability performance by quarter in recent years.

Year	Q1	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.
2025/26	34.3%	32.8%		
2024/25	34.1%	35.5%	24.7%	36.6%
2023/24	46.5%	38.4%	33.5%	41.5%
2022/23	44.4%	40.3%	35.9%	41.7%

*Total On Call fire engine availability by quarter*

<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).

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3.22 The table below shows availability performance by station for the year-to-date.

<b>5. Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)</b>					<b>2025/26</b>
<b>Station</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	
Crowthorne	68.7%	<b>61.3%</b>			
Hungerford	19.9%	<b>36.2%</b>			
Lambourn	1.0%	<b>2.7%</b>			
Maidenhead	25.9%	<b>21.0%</b>			
Mortimer	55.7%	<b>42.7%</b>			

*On Call fire engine availability by station*

- 3.23 Crowthorne continues to maintain a good level of availability, consistently exceeding 60%.
- 3.24 Availability at Hungerford has increased substantially compared to Q1, and this trend is expected to continue as we move into Q3. Primarily, this was due to two of the managers returning to full duties. Availability for the final month of Q2 was 45.7% which is a significant increase.
- 3.25 The picture at Lambourn was also heading in the right direction with the appointment of a Watch Manager in July and a rise to 7.3% availability for that month. Unfortunately, the absence of another member of staff has caused the increase in availability to falter. Work is ongoing to support the individual to return to the workplace.
- 3.26 Maidenhead's availability during Q2 has dropped away slightly from the improvements made in Q1 as result of the new Crew Managers taking up posts there becoming temporarily unavailable. Looking forward, the renewed availability of the supervisory managers and the progression of six trainees to become part of critical crewing is expected to further improve availability.
- 3.27 Availability at Mortimer was inconsistent during Q2. Because the station has only two active managers, any leave or unavailability from these individuals has an immediate impact on availability, as was seen during August when it dropped to 33%. However, during September it bounced back to a healthier 50.3%.

<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).

**Combined Pumping Appliance Availability by Shift**

- 3.28 This section of the report provides the 2025/26 quarter two performance update against Corporate Measure 16. This was a new measure introduced in 2024 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 Q2 was 84.8%.
- 3.29 There were 14 WDS appliances available for 136 of the 184 shifts that occurred during Q2 which equates to 73.9%. When On Call appliances are taken into account for baseline service provision, the number of shifts with 14 or more appliances was 156 out of 184, or 84.8% of the shifts.
- 3.30 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 uptake for PAOT and On Call availability are both better:

Shift	Total	x14 WDS available	x14+ WDS/OC available	% of shifts with x14+ available
All	184	136	164	84.8%
Day	92	59	68	73.9%
Night	92	77	88	95.7%

*Quarter two performance against CM16 overall and by day/night.*

- 3.31 The table below shows performance against CM16 by quarter since the start of 2024/25:

16. Percentage of time that 14 or more pumping appliances are available				2025/26 Target: 100%	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Date
Previous Year (2024/25)	91.2%	70.1%	82.6%	96.7%	80.6%
Target	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2025/26 Actual	90.1%	84.8%			87.5%

*Quarterly performance for CM16 compared to previous year*

<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).

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- 3.32 It is noteworthy that performance in Q2 is significantly improved in comparison with the same period last year. This has been driven by a substantial reduction in the number of shifts which saw a WDS appliance unavailable from 82 during Q2 last year to 48 for the same period this year. This is testament to a number of measures that have been taken to improve availability including the addition of 10 firefighter posts and improved oversight of crewing from the Operational Support and Improvement Team.
- 3.33 It is hoped that a number of other workstreams including a revision of the leave policy, due to come into effect for the 2026 calendar year, will further contribute to improvements in WDS availability and therefore support the baseline provision of 14 fire appliances.
- 3.34 Priority Six (P6) is now embedded within service ways of working and is routinely implemented where On Call appliance availability allows.
- 3.35 P6 was invoked on eleven occasions during Q2 to support baseline service provision resulting in an estimated saving of £11,475 in PAOT costs.
- 3.36 Overall, during the period since it was implemented on 16 September 2024 to the end of Q2 in 2025/26, P6 has reduced the PAOT spend by an estimated £58,107.

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

- 4.1 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.*

*(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'*

<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).

**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. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

11.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None.

**13. APPENDICES**

13.1 None.

**14. CONTACT DETAILS**

14.1 Katie Mills, Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Director of Service Delivery,  
[millsk@RBFRS.co.uk](mailto:millsk@RBFRS.co.uk)

14.2 Tom Brandon, Area Manager, Response and Resilience,  
[brandont@RBFRS.co.uk](mailto:brandont@RBFRS.co.uk)

<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).

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ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Statement of Assurance 2024/25	A&GC	26.01.26	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	26.01.26	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal and External Audit report	A&GC	26.01.26	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	26.01.26	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	10.02.26	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Property Asset Management Strategy 2026 - 2030	Management Committee	10.02.26	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Solar PV Project Stage 2	Management Committee	10.02.26	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 25/26, Medium Term Financial Plan, SAIF and TVFCS Budget	Management Committee	10.02.26	Annual	Note and recommend	HF&P	Finance Lead	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	10.02.26	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
CRMP Priority Programmes	Management Committee	10.02.26	Every meeting	Note	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	10.02.26	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Annual	Decision	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 25/26, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Annual	Decision	HF&P	Finance Lead	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Annual	Decision	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	16.03.26	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	16.03.26	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	16.03.26	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	N/A	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances	A&GC	16.03.26	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	16.03.26	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Members Code of Conduct Consultation	A&GC	16.03.26	Every four years	Decision	MO	N/A	Part I
CRMP Priority Programmes	Management Committee	16.04.26	Every meeting	Note	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2025/26	Fire Authority	30.04.26	Annual	Decision	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	30.04.26	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	30.04.26	Annual	Decision	HCS	N/A	Part I

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