



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

**Tuesday, 12th October 2021**

**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:** Tuesday, 12th October 2021 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 Dennis Benneyworth     | Councillor Angus Ross               |
| Councillor Jeff Brooks            | Councillor David Cannon             |
| Councillor Tricia Brown           | Councillor Jo Lovelock              |
| Councillor Colin Dudley           | Councillor Dexter Smith             |
| Councillor Paul Gittings          | Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey |
| Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons |                                     |

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

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Pincent's Kiln  
Calcot  
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Representative Bodies**

Purpose:

The Chairman 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 Chairman 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 29 July 2021 (Pages 7 - 16)**

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on Thursday, 29 July 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

Recommendation:

To receive announcements from the Chairman 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. Firewatch Strategic Waiver (Pages 17 - 24)**

Purpose:

To agree the extension of the existing Firewatch support for a period of five years.

**8. 2021/22 Budget Monitoring - Quarter One (Pages 25 - 34)**

Purpose:

To receive for note the estimated revenue outturn and update on Capital Projects as at the end of Quarter One 2021/22.

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

Purpose:

To note the performance of Appliance Availability in Quarter One.

**10. Forward Plan (Pages 41 - 44)**

Recommendation:

To note the Forward Plan.

**11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 7 December 2021, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**12. Exclusion of the Public (Pages 45 - 46)**

Recommendation:

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

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

**13. Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2021** *(Pages 47 - 50)*

Recommendation:

That the Part II Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 29 July 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**14. Senior Leadership Team - Restructure and Senior Staff Pay** *(Pages 51 - 100)*

Purpose:

To agree options outlined in the report.

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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Thursday, 29th July, 2021 at 6.30 pm  
 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Newsham  
 Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD

**Members:**  
 (\*present)

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Councillor Jeff Brooks               | * Councillor Angus Ross              |
| Councillor Dennis Benneyworth        | * Councillor David Cannon            |
| * Councillor Tricia Brown            | * Councillor Jo Lovelock             |
| * Councillor Colin Dudley            | Councillor Dexter Smith              |
| * Councillor Paul Gittings           | * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey |
| * Councillor Pauline Helliars-Symons |                                      |

**In Attendance:** Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
 Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
 Alex Brown (Head of Capital Projects and Estates, HCP&E)  
 Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
 Jess James (Area Manager, Resource and Resilience, AM R&R)  
 Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)  
 Andrew Mclenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)  
 Katie Mills (Director of Corporate Services, DCS)  
 Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DCE)  
 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)  
 Tregear Thomas (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection)

### Action

#### 5. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

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

#### 6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Dennis Benneyworth and Dexter Smith.

#### 7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Ross and Cannon declared a personal interest as 2021/22 Members

of the TVFCS Joint Committee on Item 9, Thames Valley Fire Control Mobilising Requirements.

Councillor Jo Lovelock declared a personal interest as Chairman of Planning Committee and Ward Councillor for Reading Borough Council on Part II Item 18, Capital Projects – Asset Release Strategy Update – Pangbourne and Dee Road.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

## **8. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 APRIL AND 30 JUNE 2021**

Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead (DSL), confirmed the action on page 11 of the agenda pack was completed, all Management Committee Members received a copy of the presentation following the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the actions and the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April and 30 June 2021, be approved as a true and correct record to be signed by the Chairman.

## **9. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

### COVID-19 Update - Stage 4 of Government Roadmap

As you will be aware, Step 4 of the Government's roadmap took effect on Monday, 19 July, resulting in the end of the majority of COVID-19 legal restrictions in England.

Our priority continues to be maintaining our critical core services for our communities and protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. Following Management Committee this evening, there will be a short briefing for Members to provide the latest information on how the Service is responding to COVID-19.

### Fire Cadets Graduation Ceremony

I was delighted to attend the Fire Cadets Graduation Ceremony, which took place at Whitley Wood Fire Station on Wednesday, 21 July. After more than a year spent mostly learning from their homes, the event was an opportunity for the Fire Cadets to celebrate all their achievements from their time on the programme, taking part in demonstrations in front of family and friends.

The Graduation Ceremony was held outside, with limited capacity, enhanced safety measures in place, including social distancing and a strict cleaning regime. Well done to all the young people who have completed this year's course.

### Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices Recruitment

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is pleased to announce that recruitment is now open for wholetime firefighter apprentices.

The application window is open Wednesday, 28 July 2021, and will close at 12pm on Wednesday, 4 August 2021. The steps of the selection processes are detailed on the Service's website.

For the first time we will be recruiting apprentices into this crucial role. Much like previous wholetime recruitment, anyone from any background or walk of life can apply to be a firefighter apprentice so long as they are new to the role.

This could be someone at the beginning of their career, those returning to work after a career break or those looking for a change of career later in life. All applicants will be selected based on the same standards and decisions will be based on merit.

For more information about the process, please visit [rbfrs.co.uk/wholetimefirefighter](http://rbfrs.co.uk/wholetimefirefighter).

### Disability Confident Leader Accreditation

We are pleased to announce that we are now a Disability Confident Leader in the Disability Confident Scheme.

In becoming a Disability Confident Leader, we join approximately 360 other organisations who have achieved this level, of over 20,000 organisations who have signed up to the scheme.

This achievement is testament to the work of colleagues across all areas of the Service to ensure that our organisation is fair and inclusive for all colleagues and members of our local community.

We are committed to continuing to work with Leonard Cheshire and the Business Disability Forum to expand on this work, as part of our wider commitment to making our Service accessible and inclusive for all.

### Armed Forces Veterans' Hub Meeting

I am pleased to announce that the last meeting of the Armed Forces Veterans' Hub took place on Friday, 25 June.

The meeting focused on the services offered to veterans by a selection of organisations with COVID restrictions anticipated to ease shortly.

We hope that all future meetings following this will be held in person on fire stations across the County.

Thank you to everyone who supported and took part, we are proud to play our part in supporting the armed forces community.

**10. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

There were no issues arising from Audit and Governance Committee.

**11. RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMITTEE**

Item 9 was recommended from Thames Valley Fire Control Joint Committee on 12 July, and Item 10 recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 19 July 2021.

**12. BUILT ENVIRONMENT: IMPACTS OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGE**

Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) introduced the item and handed over to Tregear Thomas, Area Manager Prevention and Protection, (AM P&P).

Tregear Thomas provided an overview of the new Fire Safety Act 2021, which gained Royal Assent in April 2021 and was awaiting a date for commencement. He stated the Fire Safety Act 2021 provided clarification on the Fire Safety Order 2005 for buildings with two or more domestic dwellings.

In detailing the main benefits of the Building Safety Bill, he listed the approximate costs in establishing the:

- Building Safety Regulator
- Local building control bodies
- Local Fire and Rescue Authorities (costs created for local authorities may be funded through the Building Safety Regulator or in line with the New Burdens doctrine)

Tregear Thomas outlined the indicative timeline of the Building Safety Bill and stated it was due to become an Act in early 2022, with commencement in early 2023. In discussing the Built Environment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) he stated representatives from each unitary authority would be requested to participate to influence the future direction of the regulation.

In answer to a question from the Vice-Chairman, he stated the costs listed in his presentation were national figures and measures of the Building Safety Bill ensured the construction of buildings were held to the new rigorous safety standards and that existing buildings were expected to be brought up to standard.

The Vice-Chairman offered the support of Fire Authority Members in the MOU. Councillor Gittings stated that he welcomed the new Building Safety measures and asked whether the Fire Authority had the capacity to train Fire Safety Inspection Officers (FSIO) in-house.

Tregear Thomas responded by stating that the Service recently recruited 13 FSIOs who were working towards their accreditation with Fire Institute

Engineers. Mark Arkwell added that the Fire Authority had invested £600,000 in the Built Environment programme.

In answer to a question from the Chairman in regards to the retention of the newly appointed FSIOs, Tregear Thomas stated that the Service wanted to ensure it was an employer of choice and that there were policies in place where the Service would be recompensed if an individual left the Service within a timeframe, following training.

Councillor Shepherd-DuBey asked how the Service intended to get existing buildings up to standard. Tregear Thomas reported that the High Rise Residential Team had inspected high rise residential buildings in the County to date, and some temporary measures had been implemented, such as waking watches. He also stated the Team were looking at how to make Medium Rise buildings safe.

In answer to a question from Councillor Ross, Tregear Thomas stated that private developers would not be in the position to choose who regulates them.

The Chairman thanked Tregear Thomas for such a comprehensive presentation.

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

### **13. THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL MOBILISING REQUIREMENTS**

Mark Arkwell; DCFO, introduced the report and delivered a presentation. He advised the report was a recommendation from Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee on 12 July 2021.

He provided a comprehensive overview of the TVFCS legal partnership agreement, the TVFCS mobilising system and the mitigated risks in the contract extension. The recommendation was pursuant to the TVFCS partnership agreement, which was to agree a contract extension of the 'Vision 4' mobilising system for one year (from April 2022 – March 2033), and to note the projected expenditure from the TVFCS renewals account.

Councillor Ross reported that the TVFCS Joint Committee held a robust discussion and stated that he supported the recommendation. Councillor Cannon thanked Mark Arkwell for presenting the report in succinct detail.

The Chairman thanked Councillors Ross and Cannon for their involvement in the Joint Committee. He reported that there had been personnel changes to Members on the Joint Committee in recent months and added that the key pillar of the Fire Service was to respond to incidents. He added, that it was necessary the Control Room had the right equipment to deploy assets.

Councillor Ross moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Cannon.

**RESOLVED** that:

- It be agreed to extend the TVFCS Mobilising system contract for one year, from April 2022 to March 2023.
- The projected expenditure from the TVFCS Renewals Account commensurate with requirements outlined in the Capita 'system report' summarised at point 3.36 be noted.

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

**14. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROPERTY ASSET RELEASE**

Conor Byrne; Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), presented the report and advised the report was a recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee on 19 July 2021.

In referring to Appendix A, *Guiding Principles on Property Asset Release*, he highlighted the document was based on the ethical principles set out in the Core Code for Fire and Rescue Services and that it detailed issues the disposal team were required to consider throughout any disposal process. He stated, whichever disposal route, transparency and objectivity would be demonstrated.

In answer to a question from the Vice-Chairman, Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DCHx), reported that The Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (Core Code) is based on the Nolan Principles. This is now a National Fire Standard which all Fire and Rescue Services should adhere to.

Councillor Ross thanked Officers in the development of the Guiding Principles and supported the recommendation. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Cannon.

**RESOLVED** that the attached document (Appendix A) entitled *Guiding Principles on property Asset Release* be approved.

**15. UNICORN NETWORK CONTRACT VARIATION & EXTENSION**

Nikki Richards; Deputy Chief Executive (DChx), presented the report. She stated the report was seeking Members approval to extend an existing contract with BT under the Unicorn framework for the provision of Managed Wide Area Network, Local Area Network, Wireless Network and Firewall infrastructure and services.

She reported the contract costs fell into two categories, the first were one-off costs for equipment and services to prepare, install and commission the equipment associated with the variation amount of £375k. Provision for this amount had been approved by the Fire Authority in the 2021/22 Strategic Asset Investment Fund (SAIF) for ICT. The second was the ongoing costs of £245.5.k

per annum. The ongoing costs will be funded from the existing ICT budget.

The Chairman stated he felt the recommendation was important, as it improved the Services' resilience to security and 4G connectivity. Councillor Ross added that the recommendation came within the three principles of the ICT Strategy which were, Simplification, Collaboration and Virtualisation.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Ross.

**RESOLVED** that it be agreed to extend and vary the existing contract with BT under the Unicorn framework in order to improve capacity and resilience of network services, in preparation for enablement of critical cloud based services as driven by the current ICT strategy, with the intention of retendering the contract in 2025, in line with the Unicorn Framework arrangements.

## 16. 2020/21 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

Conor Byrne; HF&P, provided an update on the provisional 2020/21 revenue and capital outturn positions. In referring to the Revenue Outturn, he reported the 2020/21 Revenue Budget was set at £35.263m, with expenditure anticipated to exceed income by £284,000, which resulted in the Fire Authority being reliant on its reserves to balance the budget.

The outturn position for the year showed a deficit of £49,000 which was funded from reserves. He stated that the Government Grant and precept income received was more than the Authority had budgeted for, due to an additional £56,000 from Business rates Pooling and higher than expected NNDR section 31 Grants of £78,000.

COVID-19 related financial pressures had created different ways of working and reduced activities in certain areas, which had resulted in savings listed in 3.6 of the report. In addition to COVID-19 related savings, there were some other savings against the budget on the *Communications* line and *Contracts* line were less budgeted.

Savings of £137,000 on the *Stations* line mainly relate to the decision to close Wargrave Fire Station. This saving was partly offset by the 2.75% pay award for green book staff. He stated that the savings were not sufficient to balance the budget due to significant budget pressures in other areas.

In referring to the pressures on the *Repairs & Maintenance* line, Conor Byrne made reference to the Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF), which highlighted fire stations were in need of significant investment.

He added another significant pressure related to pension costs, surrounding the complexities of pension administration following the McCloud judgement. He reported the Capital expenditure in 2020/21 was £6.513 million and that the progress against the projects was shown in Appendix B.

Councillor Gittings asked whether the savings highlighted in paragraph 3.6 was a result of the pandemic, and whether they would become permanent savings.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), reported the Service had started looking at new ways of working post COVID, for example flexible ways of working, however it was too early to predict permanent savings.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Conor Byrne and his team for such a comprehensive report, and queried the £24,000 overspend on the rebuild of Crowthorne Fire Station.

Mark Arkwell; DCFO, reported that he would circulate the reason of the overspend to Members.

DCFO

In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey in relation to savings and whether the Service measured it's carbon reduction, Wayne Bowcock; CFO, reported that the Service currently do not have the baselines or indicators to measure carbon reduction, however this would be looked at in the future.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **17. APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY BY CREWING TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 16 AND 17**

Jess James; Area Manager Response and Resilience (AM R&R), presented the Quarter Four update on Appliance Availability to meet Corporate Measures 16 (Whole-time) and 17 (On-Call). He reported the total number of Whole-time shifts in the quarter were 180 and there were two incidences where critical stand-by cover was used to cover short-term sickness. Performance of appliance availability across the Service's 14 Whole-time appliances was 98.9%.

The On-Call availability was 59.1% and was an improvement on the 53.3% in the previous quarter.

COVID-19 had a positive impact on On-Call availability, however Quarter One 2021/22 may see a reduction of cover due to staff returning to their full-time place of work as restrictions ease.

The Chairman requested his thanks to be placed on record to all Whole-time and On-Call crews for their flexibility and dedication during this unprecedented time. He asked whether the figures achieved in the availability of Whole-time and On-Call staff could be maintained going forward.

Jess James reported groups of staff across Stations have set up a Task and Finish Group to look at support measures.

Councillor Lovelock asked a question relating to the effects of Track and Trace on crews and Councillor Gittings asked a question on whether the Service could

liaise with the employers of On-Call staff to seek greater flexibility on their employees' time.

Mark Arkwell; DCFO, advised that the Service did anticipate an impact to the availability figures in Quarter Two, due to the above reasons, however stated that he was confident due to scenario planning by Officers.

**RESOLVED:**

- That the 2020/21 Q4 performance of 98.9% appliance availability of the Service's 14 Whole-time appliance availability in line with Corporate Measure 16 be noted.
- That the 2020/21 Q4 performance of overall On-Call appliance availability of 59.1% against the Service target of 60% in Corporate Measure 17 be noted.

**18. FORWARD PLAN**

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

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 12 October 2021, 6.30pm, Lynda Kenyon Suite at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the 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.

*(The meeting concluded at 8.14pm)*

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**

|                           |                                                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COMMITTEE</b>          | <b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>                                   |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>    | <b>12 OCTOBER 2021</b>                                        |
| <b>SUBJECT</b>            | <b>FIREWATCH STRATEGIC WAIVER</b>                             |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER</b>       | <b>TONY VINCENT, HEAD OF BUSINESS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS</b> |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>        | <b>COUNCILLOR ANGUS ROSS</b>                                  |
| <b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b> | <b>NONE</b>                                                   |
| <b>ACTION</b>             | <b>FOR DECISION</b>                                           |

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. Firewatch is the current Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform implemented at RBFRS, and is used across many elements of the organisation as a deeply embedded set of tools, supporting multiple facets of both business and operational activity.
- 1.2. RBFRS owns perpetual licenses for the Firewatch modules that are in use, and pays for updates and maintenance of those modules in the form of a support contract. The current support contract started in April 2016, and is due to expire at the end of March 2022. Total contract spend to date is approximately £460k.
- 1.3. Firewatch is an integral tool used across a wide range of business and operational processes. To move away from Firewatch in the short term would entail significant organisational disruption and additional costs. In addition, Firewatch is aligned with the ICT strategy in so far as a homogenous, single vendor supplied set of tools are simpler to maintain and evolve than a multi-vendor, multi-platform solution, which would also require multiple points of integration with other systems to replicate the current Firewatch modules in use.

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- 1.4. RBFRS' current capacity for change and additional financial pressures are currently severely limited. This is unlikely to change in the medium term due to the increasing deployments in national standards and guidance, but also due to the volatility of funding over the next period as UK PLC recovers from both Brexit and the global Pandemic.
- 1.5. Extending the existing contract for a further 5 years would provide closer alignment with the current ICT strategy window (to 2024), and provide sufficient time to initiate, execute and complete a migration project by 2027 in the event that the strategic direction changes at the next strategy refresh cycle.
- 1.6. The cost to extend the support contract is approximately £326k, resulting in a total contract lifetime cost of approx. £786k
- 1.7. RBFRS has carried out a voluntary ex-ante transparency notice (VEAT) exercise in order to identify any challenges from the market on any support contract extension. This exercise yielded no such challenge, meaning a tender process is not required to extend the contract.
- 1.8. Although the total contract cost is below the normal £1m contract limit, the reliance on a VEAT notice for contract extension obliges RBFRS to seek Management Committee approval.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the strategic intent for use of Firewatch within RBFRS as detailed in section 3.14 of this report.
- 2.2 **AGREE** to the extension of the existing Firewatch support contract for a period of 5 years from the current renewal date in March 2022 at a total contract cost of £786k relying on a VEAT exercise to avoid the normal tendering process.

## 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1. Firewatch is a suite of application modules that span a group of business and operational functions. Such applications suites are normally referred to as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms.
- 3.2. The majority of commercially available ERP platforms are aimed at general business operations. Whilst RBFRS does carry out these business activities, much of RBFRS day-to-day operational activity is Fire Sector specific, which "Standard" ERP platforms do not support. RBFRS is able to keep overall

costs low through the use of Firewatch. The alternative would require multiple software platforms and services, which would all require multiple points of integration to function as a whole with RBFRS existing business and operational processes.

- 3.3. Firewatch has been implemented within RBFRS since the early 2000s. Over this period of time, many RBFRS business and operational processes have become deeply dependant of specific Firewatch capabilities.
- 3.4. RBFRS purchases Firewatch modules on a perpetual license basis, meaning that ongoing revenue costs are limited to support/maintenance. From time to time one-off capital costs associated with new modules, functionality and project based work will be incurred.
- 3.5. The current contract was put in place after a full tender exercise in 2016, and is due to terminate on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Total spending under this contract to date is £460,038.12.
- 3.6. The activities that depend on Firewatch currently range across finance reporting, crewing rotas, individual flexitime management, holiday approval, sickness management, duty planning timesheets and payments, availability integration with the Vision mobilising system, overtime management, training and development management, occupational health and health and safety management, Fleet and asset management, visual dashboards and a myriad of reports that assist staff and management in running their departments on a day-to-day basis.
- 3.7. RBFRS has a long history of working closely with Infographics to continuously enhance and develop the Firewatch suite of products. During quarter 3 of 2021/22, ICT expect to make available additional enhancements based on operational and business requests, which will include a shift marketplace capability, asset management enhancements for both facilities and finance, stores ordering front end, crewing holiday enhancement and a mobile app, all of which will realise significant efficiencies in day-to-day activities across the organisation. In 2022, Infographics expect to launch the next major version of Firewatch, which will bring additional enhancements in usability as well as look and feel. In addition, Infographics development work is underway on protection and prevention modules, which could be strategic candidates to replace some elements of IBIS in the longer term.
- 3.8. The ICT strategy is founded on three principles, the first of which is simplification. Simplification should apply to all we do – and encompasses both user experience and the underlying architectures and systems. Put simply, simpler systems are easier to support and develop than complex systems with interconnecting and interdependent elements. It follows

## Agenda Item 7

therefore that single vendor integrated solutions present a more strategically aligned solution than the best-of-breed approach that represents the only real alternative.

- 3.9. Although it is true that the single vendor approach inevitably leads to some areas for improvement in functionality or performance, given a finite amount of resource to implement, develop and maintain any given system, in a single vendor solution a greater proportion of energy can be put into building a true supplier partnership and input into development to address deficiencies over time.
- 3.10. A change in direction away from Firewatch does not only run counter to the ICT strategy, but would most likely entail forced changes to core business and operational processes across most of the organisation, leading to potentially significant disruption. Such a migration project, due to its scope, would likely need to run for 2-3 years in order to minimise as far as possible any disruption. For the duration of any migration project, the existing Firewatch systems would need to be maintained, essentially duplicating costs. In addition, where multiple systems are required to replicate or supplant Firewatch capabilities, expert resource will be required to establish and implement the points of integration necessary to ensure correct overall operation.
- 3.11. RBFRS is entering a period of extreme financial volatility, as public finances begin to recover from both Brexit and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the inherent uncertainty in funding levels over the next period, it would be irresponsible to embark on a major systems change programme, given the high likelihood of increased costs both from a one-off and ongoing perspective. The lowest risk path for the next 3-5 years is to maintain our existing systems and processes, and look for opportunities to improve upon areas of functionality through strong working relationships with Infographics wherever resourcing and funding allow. This approach is inherently more agile than commissioning and executing an organisation-wide systems and business process change programme, with many complex interdependencies to navigate.
- 3.12. RBFRS has already identified a very significant operationally focussed change programme over the next 2-3 years, to improve efficiency and effectiveness and align with national best practice. The identified workload has already caused some important, but lower priority activities to be put on hold. Wholesale changes to key supporting systems and platforms would generate resource and effort requirements beyond RBFRS' current capacity to absorb, even if a financial business case could be made.

- 3.13. The overall cost to extend existing support contracts to the end of March 2027 is £325,881.00, bringing the total in-life contract costs to £785,919.12.
- 3.14. Taking all of the above into account, it is recommended that RBFRS' ERP strategic intent should therefore be:
  - 3.14.1. To retain Firewatch as RBFRS' strategic ERP platform for at least the next 5 years.
  - 3.14.2. To continue to invest energy into strengthening RBFRS' relationship with Infographics in order to shape the future direction of the platform.
  - 3.14.3. To seek opportunities to further consolidate business and operational functionality using the infographics suite of products.
  - 3.14.4. To seek further opportunities to guide Firewatch development towards greater integration with external platforms (e.g. Microsoft 365, Azure, Vision, Sage, etc.)
  - 3.14.5. To extend the current support contract for 5 years to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027, at an estimated total contract cost of approximately £786k.
  - 3.14.6. To review this strategic intent in 2024, as part of the planned restatement of the ICT strategy, leaving 3 full years of support contract to plan for and execute any agreed transition if so indicated by the strategy.
- 3.15. Infographics is the developer of the Firewatch suite of products and the sole supplier of support and development expertise in the market place. As such, no alternative suppliers are available to carry out a tendering process as would be normal practice for software or application support contract extensions. RBFRS Procurement carried out a voluntary ex-ante transparency notice exercise earlier in 2021, which resulted in no challenges to the stated goal of extending the support contract for up to 5 years. The reliance on a VEAT notice for extending the contract without a tender process obliges RBFRS to seek Management Committee approval to proceed, even though the total contract value is below the normal £1m threshold.

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

- 4.1 Commitment 1 – We will provide advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.

## Agenda Item 7

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

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant incremental financial implications associated with the strategic direction outlined in this report. Identified costs to extend support for the Firewatch suite of products remain largely in line with previous years and are funded from baseline revenue budgets.
- 5.2 Shifting focus from Firewatch to alternative platforms is likely to introduce very significant one-off costs to change, and potentially significantly higher ongoing charges as a result of having to enter into and maintain multiple support contracts across different vendors. It is probably that in this scenario, additional costs will surface due to software integration requirements across differing platforms.
- 5.3 The financial scope of the support contract would normally trigger a full tender process, however Infographics is the sole supplier of Firewatch, and so it has been possible to conduct a Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notice exercise, which yielded no challenges, and which means no tender process is required in order to extend the contract.
- 5.4 Although the total contract life costs are below £1m, Management Committee approval is still required to progress the contract extension as the VEAT notice requires a contract waiver. Any contract waivers exceeding £100k in value must receive Management Committee approval to proceed.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. To comply with procurement rules, a voluntary ex-ante transparency notice (VEAT) has been completed regarding the extension of the existing Firewatch support contract.
- 6.2. No challenges to Infographics as sole viable supplier were received, which means that in this case a full tender is not required.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for each major revision to the Firewatch suite of products over the extended contract period.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. Staying with RBFERS' existing Firewatch platform and working closely with the supplier on future developments presents the lowest risk approach to maintaining operational and business continuity.

8.2. Conversely, a change of platform would be highly likely to introduce disruption and risk to ongoing departmental processes.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1. The use of Firewatch for Enterprise Resource Planning within RBFERS does not present any immediate opportunities for collaboration.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.

10.2 The Head of Finance and Procurement was consulted during the preparation of this report.

10.3 The Monitoring Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 None.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Tony Vincent  
Head of Business Information and Systems  
[vincentt@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:vincentt@rbfrs.co.uk)  
07787263320

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



|                           |                                                     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COMMITTEE</b>          | <b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>                         |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>    | <b>12 OCTOBER 2021</b>                              |
| <b>SUBJECT</b>            | <b>2021/22 BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER ONE</b>      |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER</b>       | <b>CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b> |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>        | <b>COUNCILLOR DENNIS BENNEYWORTH</b>                |
| <b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b> | <b>NONE</b>                                         |
| <b>ACTION</b>             | <b>FOR NOTE</b>                                     |

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 To inform members of the estimated revenue outturn and to provide an update on capital projects at the end of quarter one 2021/22.

**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 one, 2021/22 is shown in **Appendix A**. Net costs of TVFCS for quarter one are shown in **Appendix B**.

3.2 The 2021/22 Revenue Budget agreed by Members in February 2021 was set at £35.779m. Expenditure was anticipated to exceed income by £29,000, meaning that the Fire Authority was reliant on its reserves to balance the budget.

3.3 Whilst staffing salary budgets were set based on the central Government position of a public sector pay freeze, the NJC have subsequently agreed a grey book pay award of 1.5% effective from 1 July 2021, which will cost an estimated additional £240,000. A final offer of 1.75% has also been made for green book staff. If agreed, this will be effective from 1 April 2021 and will cost an estimated additional £132,000. The reported variances on employee costs

## Agenda Item 8

reflect this and also take account of the projected saving on on-call stations and ongoing crewing pressures in quarter 1, mainly linked to COVID-19.

- 3.4 Additional costs are estimated for repairs and maintenance of £41,000.
- 3.5 There is an additional cost pressure in relation to legal fees which are forecast to exceed the allocated budget by £70,000.
- 3.6 In recent months, the Authority has been working in collaboration with a property specialist to enable us to challenge via appeal the business rate charges applied to our properties. This has proven to be successful and confirmation has recently been received of the value of the back-dated refunds amounting to £55,000 for four stations, which will be received in 2021/22. The process is ongoing in relation to our other stations. Business rates for the new station in Theale are yet to be confirmed but a part-year estimate has been included in the outturn forecast.
- 3.7 Cross border charges data has been agreed with Thames Valley partners for the first quarter of the year and the estimated outturn position is anticipated that charges will be £33,000 lower (under Contracts Other) and income £35,000 higher than the budgeted targets.
- 3.8 At the point of budget setting, there was uncertainty about the final level of funding the Authority would receive via the Berkshire unitary authorities and section 31 grants. Final confirmation was received after the budget was set and the Authority will be receiving an additional £251,000.
- 3.9 The forecast year-end outturn shows a deficit of £290,000 to be funded from reserves, an increase of £261,000 from the budget setting position.

### **Capital**

- 3.10 Capital expenditure in quarter 1, 2021/22 and supporting commentary for each respective scheme is shown in **Appendix C**.

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

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The forecast outturn position on the Revenue Account is expected to increase the call on reserves to £290,000 by the end of the financial year.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The revenue and capital outturns together with the reserves position are consistent with the assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

8.2 Regular monitoring of expenditure against budgets helps ensure that resources are matched to need.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

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

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

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

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Agenda and Minutes, Royal Berkshire Authority: 17 February 2021.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A – Revenue position at quarter 1 2021/22

12.2 Appendix B – Net costs of TVFCS quarter 1 2021/22

12.3 Appendix C – Capital position at quarter 1 2021/22

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Conor Byrne  
Head of Finance and Procurement  
07585 991602

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|                                                 | Annual<br>Budget<br>£'000 | Jun-21<br>Outturn<br>£'000 | Forecast to<br>YE<br>£'000 | Fcast - Budget<br>Variance<br>£'000 |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>EMPLOYEES</b>                                |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| STATIONS                                        | 16,646                    | 4,114                      | 16,890                     | 244                                 |
| NON-STATIONS                                    | 11,458                    | 2,828                      | 11,623                     | 165                                 |
| TRAINING                                        | 555                       | 53                         | 555                        | 0                                   |
| OTHER                                           | 257                       | 60                         | 276                        | 19                                  |
|                                                 | <b>28,916</b>             | <b>7,055</b>               | <b>29,344</b>              | <b>428</b>                          |
| <b>PREMISES</b>                                 |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE                           | 724                       | 134                        | 765                        | 41                                  |
| RATES                                           | 920                       | 277                        | 918                        | (2)                                 |
| CLEANING                                        | 235                       | 48                         | 239                        | 4                                   |
| UTILITIES                                       | 456                       | 25                         | 458                        | 2                                   |
|                                                 | <b>2,335</b>              | <b>484</b>                 | <b>2,380</b>               | <b>45</b>                           |
| <b>SUPPLIES</b>                                 |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| INSURANCE                                       | 385                       | 224                        | 385                        | 0                                   |
| EQUIPMENT                                       | 507                       | 96                         | 513                        | 6                                   |
| IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES                         | 652                       | 498                        | 656                        | 4                                   |
| CLOTHING/PPE                                    | 374                       | 66                         | 374                        | 0                                   |
| COMMUNICATIONS                                  | 765                       | 62                         | 784                        | 19                                  |
| OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH                             | 198                       | 87                         | 198                        | 0                                   |
| PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS     | 139                       | 69                         | 148                        | 9                                   |
| COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES                  | 180                       | 7                          | 180                        | 0                                   |
| SUPPLIES OTHER                                  | 201                       | 32                         | 205                        | 4                                   |
|                                                 | <b>3,401</b>              | <b>1,141</b>               | <b>3,443</b>               | <b>42</b>                           |
| <b>CONTRACTS</b>                                |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS & COLLABORATION           | 911                       | 209                        | 921                        | 10                                  |
| LEGAL                                           | 50                        | 1                          | 120                        | 70                                  |
| CONTRACTS OTHER (incl Professional Services)    | 795                       | 13                         | 753                        | (42)                                |
|                                                 | <b>1,756</b>              | <b>223</b>                 | <b>1,794</b>               | <b>38</b>                           |
| <b>TRANSPORT</b>                                |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS                           | 694                       | 36                         | 693                        | (1)                                 |
| TRAVEL                                          | 217                       | 37                         | 207                        | (10)                                |
|                                                 | <b>911</b>                | <b>73</b>                  | <b>900</b>                 | <b>(11)</b>                         |
| <b>PENSIONS</b>                                 |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| PENSIONS                                        | 406                       | 92                         | 410                        | 4                                   |
|                                                 | <b>406</b>                | <b>92</b>                  | <b>410</b>                 | <b>4</b>                            |
| <b>INCOME</b>                                   |                           |                            |                            |                                     |
| GRANTS                                          | (2,217)                   | (2,030)                    | (2,217)                    | 0                                   |
| RENTAL INCOME                                   | (173)                     | (102)                      | (173)                      | 0                                   |
| TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME                           | (324)                     | (81)                       | (324)                      | 0                                   |
| INCOME OTHER                                    | (305)                     | (13)                       | (339)                      | (34)                                |
|                                                 | <b>(3,019)</b>            | <b>(2,226)</b>             | <b>(3,053)</b>             | <b>(34)</b>                         |
| <b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>                     | <b>34,706</b>             | <b>6,842</b>               | <b>35,218</b>              | <b>512</b>                          |
| DEBT CHARGES INTEREST                           | 374                       | 19                         | 374                        | 0                                   |
| INVESTMENT INTEREST                             | (10)                      | (2)                        | (10)                       | 0                                   |
| REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL                      | 600                       | 0                          | 600                        | 0                                   |
| CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO STAFFING COSTS         | (163)                     | 0                          | (163)                      | 0                                   |
| APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES                | (328)                     | 0                          | (328)                      | 0                                   |
| FINANCING COSTS                                 | 629                       | 0                          | 629                        | 0                                   |
| <b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>                          | <b>35,808</b>             | <b>6,859</b>               | <b>36,320</b>              | <b>512</b>                          |
| GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS                             | (35,779)                  | (11,476)                   | (36,030)                   | (251)                               |
| <b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT BEFORE USE OF RESERVES</b> | <b>29</b>                 | <b>(4,617)</b>             | <b>290</b>                 | <b>261</b>                          |

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Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

|                                                | <b>Annual<br/>Budget<br/>£'000</b> | <b>Outturn<br/>to June 21<br/>£'000</b> | <b>Forecast<br/>to Y/E<br/>£'000</b> | <b>Forecast<br/>Variance<br/>£'000</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>EMPLOYEES</b>                               | 1,798                              | 465                                     | 1,824                                | 26                                     |
| <b>CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFRS</b> | 324                                | 81                                      | 324                                  | 0                                      |
| <b>SUPPLIES/ OTHER</b>                         | 38                                 | 1                                       | 38                                   | 0                                      |
| <b>TECHNOLOGY</b>                              | 250                                | 6                                       | 250                                  | 0                                      |
| <b>NET COST OF TVFCS</b>                       | <b>2,410</b>                       | <b>553</b>                              | <b>2,436</b>                         | <b>26</b>                              |
| <b>RBFRS Share of Costs (37.8%)</b>            | 911                                | 209                                     | 921                                  | 10                                     |

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| Active Capital Projects                         |                                  | Total Project Budget<br>£000's | Actual Spend in Prior Years<br>£000's | Actual Spend in Q1 20-21<br>£000's | TOTAL Estimated Project Spend to Completion<br>£000's | Total Estimated Project Spend<br>£000's | Commentary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New tri-service community fire station - Theale |                                  | 9,220                          | 6,016                                 | 989                                | 2,215                                                 | 9,220                                   | The new fire station at Theale continues to progress well, with completion of the build expected by mid-September 2021. There have been significant challenges in terms of delays to mains utility connections, which has been out of the control of officers to date, however the impact has been successfully mitigated. Following a period of final fit out, commissioning, testing and end user site induction, staff will relocate into their new accommodation in late September 2021. Other site users (including our blue light partners) will then be relocated in a phased programme of works leading up to the official opening in March 2022. The project is on time and within budget. |
| Fire stations - Minor Capital Works Programme   |                                  | 1,250                          | 2                                     | 0                                  | 1,248                                                 | 1,250                                   | The complex Minor Capital Works programme is progressing through the procurement process in order to tender the individual packages of work to ensure best use of the available budget and maximum efficiencies wherever possible. This project will then move through a very carefully programmed works delivery schedule over the next 18 to 24 months to ensure that all 6 wholtime stations remain fully operational throughout the works. Regular updates on project progress will continue to be given to the Property Development Working Group to ensure Member involvement in this key project.                                                                                            |
| Fleet & equipment                               | New Fire Appliances              | 4,860                          | 3,987                                 | 152                                | 721                                                   | 4,860                                   | Four new main pumping appliances based at Wokingham Road, Bracknell, Ascot and Langley are now operational. Despite some production delays caused by Covid-19, the next four main pumping appliances have arrived in Service. The fleet team undertook acceptance testing in August, with a view to these vehicles becoming operational in Autumn.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                 | Aerial Ladder Platform           | 740                            | 756                                   | 0                                  | 0                                                     | 756                                     | The Aerial Ladder Platform arrived in Service for commissioning and driver and operator training. This has now been completed and the vehicle became fully operational in August.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                 | 4x4 Fire Appliance at Maidenhead | 175                            | 75                                    | 5                                  | 95                                                    | 175                                     | Despite some production delays caused by Covid-19, the replacement 4x4 appliance for Maidenhead has been built. The fleet team undertook acceptance testing in August with a view to the vehicle becoming operational in Autumn, following operator training.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                 | Water Rescue Vehicle             | 110                            | 0                                     | 0                                  | 110                                                   | 110                                     | The replacement Water Rescue unit vehicle has been paused as the requirements are subject to an IRMP review. This worked was paused due to Covid-19 and is due to recommence this year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                 | 8x 4x4 Utility Crew-cab Vehicles | 160                            | 110                                   | 0                                  | 50                                                    | 160                                     | Other Ancillary Vehicles – having reviewed requirements the purchase of six 4x4 utility vehicles has been completed and delivery of these was accepted in February. The vehicles have now been deployed to Crowthorne, Mortimer, Maidenhead, Lambourn, Hungerford and Caversham Road. In February, Fire Authority approve spend to purchase nine new white fleet vehicles. Initial orders have been placed for some light commercial vehicles and specifications are being finalised for further orders which will include hybrid and electric vehicles.                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | White Fleet                      | 240                            | 0                                     | 0                                  | 240                                                   | 240                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                 | BA Equipment                     | 100                            | 0                                     | 5                                  | 95                                                    | 100                                     | The replacement of Breathing Apparatus project is well underway with tender responses received from perspective manufacturers. User testing and trials of the equipment will be undertaken in quarter 2 to determine the preferred manufacturer before moving to contract award stage. This project is being undertaken in collaboration with Thames Valley partners.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| ICT - helpdesk system                           |                                  | 45                             | 29                                    | 0                                  | 16                                                    | 45                                      | Project to upgrade Alemba platform to latest 10.2 version started on 15 <sup>th</sup> July and is expected to be completed by the end of September. This includes the upgrade of both test and production system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| ICT - Sage 1000 upgrade                         |                                  | 65                             | 58                                    | 0                                  | 7                                                     | 65                                      | Phase 1 of the upgrade to Sage 1000 has been successfully implemented. Phase 2 is made up of six projects and will complete by the end of 2023/24.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| ICT - asset replacement / licences              |                                  | 1,070                          | 330                                   | 0                                  | 740                                                   | 1,070                                   | The client hardware refresh has been completed ahead of schedule and will not require additional capital investment until 2022/23 financial year, other than for standard replacment items. Focus therefore will shift to investment in foundation network connectivity and equipment to ensure that RBFRS' environment is fit to support increased use of cloud based services (e.g. Microsoft 365) in line with the ICT strategic action plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



|                           |                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COMMITTEE</b>          | <b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>                                                   |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>    | <b>12 OCTOBER 2021</b>                                                        |
| <b>SUBJECT</b>            | <b>APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY BY CREWING TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 16 AND 17</b> |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER</b>       | <b>JESS JAMES, 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 one (Q1) performance with supporting narrative on the Whole-time Duty System and the On-Call (previously referred to as the Retained Duty System) appliance availability.
- 1.2 Whole-time appliance availability through crewing for Q1 averaged **98.9%** across the Service representing an excellent achievement by all Staff across the Service given the continuing challenges of the COVID pandemic.
- 1.3 On-Call appliance availability through crewing for Q1 averaged **59.8%** across the Service against the target of 60% which is another notable achievement by all Staff and Managers.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the 2021-22 Q1 performance of **98.9%** appliance availability of the Service’s 14 Whole-time appliances in line with Corporate Measure 16<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 **NOTE** the 2021-22 Q1 performance of overall On-Call appliance availability of **59.8%** against the Service target of 60% in Corporate Measure 17<sup>2</sup>.

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1 This report provides the **2021-22 Q1** update of performance against Corporate Measure 16; to ensure 100% of full shifts where there is adequate crewing on all Whole-time frontline pumping appliances.

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Measure 16: Achieving the sufficient minimum number of qualified firefighters (4 personnel) on all Whole-time appliances (fire engines) through Q1 2021-22

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Measure 17: Percentage of hours per month where there is adequate crewing on all On-Call appliances (fire engines) through Q1 2021-22

## Agenda Item 9

- 3.2 The report also details performance against Corporate Measure 17, which sets a target of 60% of hours where there is adequate crewing on On-Call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing). This measure being applied across the individual and overall availability of the Service's five<sup>3</sup> On-Call appliances.
- 3.3 These Corporate Measures were approved at the Fire Authority meeting of 25 June 2020.
- 3.4 RBFRS employ a lean operating model in terms of our Whole-time Duty System provision. With an establishment of 324 staff, maintaining sufficient minimum numbers of qualified firefighters requires effective management combined with good support, plus flexibility and commitment from staff. Performance is reported through the Service's Strategic Performance Board (SPB) and the Audit and Governance Committee (A&G) on a quarterly basis, in addition to this report to Management Committee.

### **Whole-time Duty System Appliance Availability – Q1 2021-22 (Corporate Measure 16)**

- 3.5 The availability of the Service's 14 Whole-time appliances is measured by the percentage of shifts (day and night) that appliances are available with appropriately qualified firefighters. There were 91 days in Q1; the total number of day and night shifts for Q1 therefore equates to 182.
- 3.6 The measure allows for a two-hour period at start of each shift for any moves of operational personnel between stations. This is known as a critical stand-by move and is usually employed to cover short notice sickness.
- 3.7 Performance of appliance availability across the Service's 14 Whole-time appliances for Q1 was **98.9%** and equates to two shifts where adequate crewing was not achieved in line with the Corporate Measure. The performance in Q1 is a marginal increase on the **98.3%** performance level achieved **Q4 2021-21**.
- 3.8 There were fifteen occasions when Critical Stand-By moves were utilised at the start of shift in **Q1**. Of these, there were two occasions where the Critical Stand-by move fell outside Corporate Measure 16:
  - 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021 JY10P1  
One member of the duty watch was required to 'self-isolate' prior to the start of shift due to close family member developing COVID-19 symptoms. The appliance was available for operational deployment from 11:27hrs (2 hours 27 minutes to resolve).
  - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2021 JY14P1  
Deficiency in 'global crewing' directly attributed to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic where multiple fire fighters were required to self-isolate.
- 3.9 COVID continued to present challenges throughout the quarter with members of operational personnel required to 'self-isolate' and/or 'shield'. Service

<sup>3</sup>Pangbourne has been discounted. Source: Strategic Performance Board Q1 2021-22.

Delivery Managers, supported by the positive attitude of station-based personnel, continued to actively manage and address crewing levels to achieve the positive levels that are being reported.

It is to be noted that the high level of co-operation and commitment displayed by operational personnel has enabled the Service to flex and make the necessary arrangements to ensure operational response. With examples including on numerous occasions, firefighters from the previous duty period 'stayed on' to ensure the availability of the appliance whilst 'Critical Stand-by' arrangements were completed and the continued flexibility and support shown by On-Call members of Staff to Wholetime appliance crewing.

**On-Call Duty System Appliance Availability – Q1 2021-22  
(Corporate Measure 17)**

- 3.10 The overall availability for On-Call appliances in Q1 was **59.8%**; an increase from **59.1%** in the previous quarter but slightly less than **62.6%** in the same quarter last year. The table below provides a breakdown of appliance availability based on station and month with an averaged quarterly total:

| Station    | Availability target | Apr 21 | May 21 | Jun 21 | Q1 average |
|------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| Hungerford | 70%                 | 61.4%  | 64.5%  | 45.0%  | 57.0%      |
| Lambourn   | 40%                 | 32.9%  | 19.0%  | 28.6%  | 26.7%      |
| Pangbourne | 30%                 | 8.2%   | 10.0%  | 13.6%  | 10.6%      |
| Mortimer   | 70%                 | 84.7%  | 85.8%  | 82.8%  | 84.5%      |
| Crowthorne | 85%                 | 86.7%  | 76.5%  | 75.1%  | 79.4%      |
| Maidenhead | 70%                 | 66.1%  | 52.2%  | 36.0%  | 51.5%      |

The variations between stations are indicative of their differing establishment profiles (the number of individuals at each station, the qualifications and skill sets held, and the amount of operational cover each individual can provide).

- 3.11 The On-Call teams at Mortimer and Crowthorne fire stations continue to perform strongly in terms of appliance availability with Maidenhead and Hungerford also performing well.
- 3.12 At the end of Q1 (2021/22), the On-Call establishment numbered 71 (includes 23 individuals with dual-contracts), a decrease of two firefighters from the establishment figure of 73 recorded in the previous quarter.
- 3.13 The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact upon appliance availability with some On-Call team members continuing to work from home and away from their primary workplace. However, with the easing of restrictions this is also starting to see others return to their workplace which is now affecting the amount of availability they have been giving.

<sup>3</sup>Pangbourne has been discounted. Source: Strategic Performance Board Q1 2021-22.

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- 3.14 Looking forward to **Q2**, it is likely that availability will continue to be affected as we head into the peak leave period and summer holidays which will add high levels of pressure to the Service.
- 3.15 Hub-based management teams continue to provide support to all On-Call station-based teams to promote and increase the availability of On-Call fire appliances across the Service.

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

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

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The use of pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) continues to be utilised to maintain the sufficient minimum number of qualified firefighters and therefore appliance availability whilst also maintaining flexibility in other areas.
- 5.2 The use of PAOT through **Q1** continued to enable the Service to maintain full operational availability, capability and operational effectiveness throughout the ongoing COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None identified

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

- 7.1 None identified

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

- 9.1 None identified.

### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 21 June 2020 – Fire Authority Paper, Annual Plan 20/21.

<sup>3</sup>Pangbourne has been discounted. Source: Strategic Performance Board Q1 2021-22.

- 10.2 14 October 2019 – Management Committee Paper, 2019-20 Q1 Appliance Availability Report
- 10.3 06 February 2018 – Management Committee Paper, Review of Underpinning Assumptions of 2015 Crewing Strategy and Quarter 3 Appliance Availability Update.

**11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1 None

**12. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 12.1 Mark Arkwell – Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Service Delivery
- 12.2 Jess James – Area Manager, Service Delivery – Response.

<sup>3</sup>Pangbourne has been discounted. Source: Strategic Performance Board Q1 2021-22.

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| ITEM                                                       | DECISION BODY         | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER    | LEAD MEMBER                       | PART I / II |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| External Audit report                                      | A&GC                  | 20.10.21            | Quarterly           | Note               | HF&P            | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Internal Audit report                                      | A&GC                  | 20.10.21            | Quarterly           | Note               | HF&P            | N/A                               |             |
| Q1 Performance Report                                      | A&GC                  | 20.10.21            | Quarterly           | Note               | HCS             | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Pensions Update                                            | A&GC                  | 20.10.21            | Bi-annual           | Note               | HHR&L&D         | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Planning assumptions - Presentation                        | A&GC                  | 20.10.21            | Ad-hoc              | Note               | HF&P            | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I      |
| Lead Member Reports Six Month Update                       | Fire Authority        | 02.11.21            | Bi-annual           | Note               | Lead Officers   | Lead Members                      | Part I      |
| Built Environment Update                                   | Fire Authority        | 02.11.21            | Ad-hoc              | Note               | DCFO            | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Annual Treasury Report                                     | Fire Authority        | 02.11.21            | Annual              | Note               | HF&P            | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I      |
| TVFCS Joint Committee six month update (21/22)             | Fire Authority        | 02.11.21            | Bi-annual           | Note               | ACFO            | Collaboration Lead                | Part I      |
| Budget Monitoring Q2                                       | Management Committee  | 07.12.21            | Annual              | Note               | HF&P            | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I      |
| Appliance Availability Q2                                  | Management Committee  | 07.12.21            | quarterly           | Note               | AM (R&R)        | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Capital Projects Update                                    | Management Committee  | 07.12.21            | Ad-hoc              | Note               | HCP&E           | Strategic Assets Lead             | Part II     |
| TVFCS Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring       | TVFCS Joint Committee | 16.12.21            | Bi annual           | Note               | AM C&P and HF&P | N/A                               | Part I      |
| TVFCS Proposed Budget 2022/23                              | TVFCS Joint Committee | 16.12.21            | Annual              | Note and recommend | HF&P            | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme          | TVFCS Joint Committee | 16.12.21            | Annual              | Note               | ACFO (OCC)      | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Statement of Assurance                                     | A&GC                  | 24.01.22            | Quarterly           | Note and Recommend | HCS             | RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman   | Part I      |
| Constitutional Review : Member/Officer Protocol            | A&GC                  | 24.01.22            | every four years    | Agree              | DCS             | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England) | A&GC                  | 24.01.22            | Ad-hoc              | Agree              | DSS             | N/A                               | Part I      |
| Statement of Accounts                                      | A&GC                  | 24.01.22            | Annual              | Agree              | HF&P            | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I      |
| Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Assumptions          | A&GC                  | 24.01.22            | Annual              | Note and Recommend | HF&P            | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I      |

| ITEM                                                                                                    | DECISION BODY        | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER                    | LEAD MEMBER                                                           | PART I / II |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Pension Update / Pension Board Six Month Update                                                         | A&GC                 | 24.01.22            | Bi-annual           | Note               | HHR&L&D and Pension Board Chair | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Pay Policy Statement                                                                                    | A&GC                 | 24.01.22            | Annual              | Note and Recommend | HHR&L&D                         | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Internal Audit report                                                                                   | A&GC                 | 24.01.22            | Quarterly           | Note               | HF&P                            | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| External Audit report                                                                                   | A&GC                 | 24.01.22            | Quarterly           | Note               | HF&P                            | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Q2 Performance Report                                                                                   | A&GC                 | 24.01.22            | Quarterly           | Note               | HCS                             | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme- Presentation                                        | A&GC                 | 24.01.22            | Bi annual           | Note               | HBIS                            | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Budget Monitoring Q3                                                                                    | Management Committee | 03.02.22            | Annual              | Note               | HF&P                            | Budget and Income Generation Lead                                     | Part I      |
| Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review                                                               | Management Committee | 03.02.22            | Annual              | Note and recommend | MO                              | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Appliance Availability Q3                                                                               | Management Committee | 03.02.22            | Quarterly           | Note               | AM (R&R)                        | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Pay Policy Statement                                                                                    | Fire Authority       | 15.02.22            | Annual              | Agree              | HHR&L&D                         | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Scheme of Allowances Annual Review 22/23                                                                | Fire Authority       | 15.02.22            | Annual              | Agree              | MO                              | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England)                                              | Fire Authority       | 15.02.22            | Ad-hoc              | Agree              | DSS                             | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Annual Budget 22/23, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget | Fire Authority       | 15.02.22            | Annual              | Agree              | HF&P                            | Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead | Part I      |
| Statement of Assurance                                                                                  | Fire Authority       | 15.02.22            | Annual              | Agree              | HCS                             | RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman                                       | Part I      |
| Internal Audit Report                                                                                   | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | quarterly           | Note               | HF&P                            | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| External Audit Report                                                                                   | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | quarterly           | Note               | HF&P                            | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Gender Pay Gap                                                                                          | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | Annual              | Note               | HHR&L&D                         | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Annual Report on Members Development                                                                    | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | Annual              | Note and Recommend | HCS                             | Organisational Development Champion                                   | Part I      |
| Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances                                         | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | Annual              | Note and Recommend | HCS                             | A&GC Chairman                                                         | Part I      |
| Annual Plan 2022/23                                                                                     | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | Annual              | Note and Recommend | HCS                             | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Quarter 3 Performance Report                                                                            | A&GC                 | 23.03.22            | Quarterly           | Note               | HCS                             | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Corporate Calendar 2021/22                                                                              | Fire Authority       | 28.04.22            | Annual              | Agree              | DCS                             | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Lead Members Annual Reports                                                                             | Fire Authority       | 28.04.22            | Annual              | Note               | Lead Officers                   | Lead Members                                                          | Part I      |
| Built Environment Presentation                                                                          | Fire Authority       | 28.04.22            | Ad-hoc              | Note               | ACFO                            | N/A                                                                   | Part I      |
| Member Champion Annual Reports                                                                          | Fire Authority       | 28.04.22            | Annual              | Note               | Lead Officers                   | Member Champions                                                      | Part I      |

| ITEM                | DECISION BODY  | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | LEAD MEMBER | PART I / II |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Annual Plan 2022/23 | Fire Authority | 28.04.22            | Annual              | Agree              | DCS          | N/A         | Part I      |

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**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).<br>[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:<br>(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or<br>(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

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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).

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Appendix B

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Appendix C

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