



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

**Tuesday, 8th October, 2024**

**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, 8th October, 2024 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 George Blundell	Councillor Wendy Griffith
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Wayne Smith
Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Councillor Helen Taylor
Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Simon Werner
Councillor Paul Gittings	

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

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## **AGENDA**

### **1. Representative Bodies**

Purpose:

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

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

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

Purpose:

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

### **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2024 (Pages 7 - 16)**

Purpose:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 22 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Recommendation:

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

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

Recommendation:

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

**7. Recommendations from Committees**

There were no recommendations from Committees.

**8. Sustainability Strategy 2024 - 2029 (Pages 17 - 48)**

Purpose:

To note the Sustainability Strategy 2024 – 2029, and agree the RBFRS Sustainable Development Policy Statement for co-signature by RBFA Chair and RBFRS Chief Fire Officer.

**9. Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2024 - 2029 (Pages 49 - 82)**

Purpose:

To note the RBFRS Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2024-2029.

**10. Budget Monitoring - Quarter One (Pages 83 - 96)**

Purpose:

To note revenue and capital outturns as well as treasury position at the end of Quarter One 2024/25.

**11. Quarter One Appliance Availability to Meet Corporate Measures 14 and 15 (Pages 97 - 104)**

Purpose:

To note quarter one performance of wholetime and on-call appliance availability in line with Corporate Measures 14 and 15.

**12. Forward Plan (Pages 105 - 108)**

Recommendation:

To note the Forward Plan.

**13. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 4 December 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**14. Exclusion of Public (Pages 109 - 110)**

Recommendation:

To Resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

(as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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

**15. Part II Minutes of the Last Meeting** (*Pages 111 - 112*)

Purpose:

That the Part II Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on Monday 22 July 2024, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**16. Contingency Fire Crew Arrangements: Industrial Action Resilience** (*Pages 113 - 122*)

Purpose:

To agree recommendations outlined in the report.

**17. Thames Valley Fire Control - Contingency Call Handling Tender** (*Pages 123 - 126*)

Purpose:

To agree the recommendations in the report.

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# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Monday, 22nd July, 2024 at 6.30 pm

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

- Members:** (\*present)
- \* Councillor Jeff Brooks
  - \* Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
  - \* Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
  - \* Councillor Peter Frewer
  - \* Councillor Paul Gittings
  - Councillor Wendy Griffith
  - Councillor Joshua Reynolds
  - \* Councillor Zafar Satti
  - Councillor Wayne Smith
  - \* Councillor Helen Taylor
  - Councillor Simon Werner

**In Attendance:** Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
 Tom Brandon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)  
 Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)  
 Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)  
 Paul Brooks (Head of Assets, HoA)  
 Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
 Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)  
 Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)  
 Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DChEx)  
 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)

## Action

### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25

Councillor Paul Gittings presided over the meeting as 2023/24 Management Committee Vice-Chair. He requested nominations for the position of Chair. Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey nominated Councillor Jeff Brooks. Councillor Paul Gittings seconded the nomination.

There being no other nominations, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Jeff Brooks be elected Chair of Management Committee for the 24/25 Municipal Year.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25

The Chair sought nominations for Vice –Chair. Councillor Peter Frewer

nominated Councillor Paul Gittings. This was seconded by the Chair, Councillor Jeff Brooks.

There being no other nominations, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Paul Gittings be elected Vice-Chair of Management Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

### 3. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

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

### 4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Wendy Griffith, Josh Reynolds, Wayne Smith and Simon Werner.

### 5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024

The action to ensure that the Forward Plan published in the agenda pack until the end of the year, was complete.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting on 9 April 2024, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

### 7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **New Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices**

Last Christmas, the Service ran a recruitment campaign for a new cohort of Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices, accepting hundreds of applications over the festive period. Earlier this month, we welcomed 18 successful applicants who will become our newest Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices.

Currently, our newest cohort of recruits are away on a training course at the Fire Service College in Gloucestershire. However, they will return to Berkshire next month to complete the final few weeks of their training, before graduating in early November.

This month (July), we launched another wholetime recruitment drive. As with

previous recruitment campaigns, we have received hundreds of applications which the Resourcing and Development Team are now sorting through.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chair thanked everyone who supported the recruitment and training recruits and requested Members join him in wishing our new Apprentices the best of luck as they embark on the first steps of their new careers.

### **Particulate Blocking Fire Hoods**

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is the first service under the National personal protective equipment (PPE) framework to issue particulate blocking fire hoods.

Research carried out over the last ten years has identified several cancers that are prevalent in firefighters due to contamination, with the head and neck amongst the highest areas at risk whilst wearing PPE in a fire. The old hoods gave between 39 percent particulate blocking and the new hoods have 96 percent particulate blocking properties.

The Chair stated this was another example of how seriously we take the risk of contamination to our frontline firefighters with a commensurate quality mitigation put in place.

### **Fire Cadets Graduation**

Last week, Thirty-nine Fire Cadets from across Berkshire demonstrated their new skills at a Graduation Ceremony held at Maidenhead Fire Station.

Fire Cadets is a youth initiative programme operated by the Service and takes place at four fire stations across the County – Crowthorne, Maidenhead, Newbury, and Whitley Wood.

The Chair stated he attended the Graduation ceremony on behalf of the Authority and was privileged to present the Cadet of the Year awards for each Cadet Unit. He also stated he was pleased to see several members in attendance at the Graduation and thanked them for showing their support.

On behalf of the Authority, he congratulated all the Cadets on successfully completing the course this year.

### **Internship Opportunities**

The Service will once again be welcoming several interns over the summer months. This year marks the third year in which we have run our Summer Internship Scheme. As part of the Scheme, five interns - all of whom are aged 17 or 18 and from underrepresented groups in Berkshire – will join the Service for five weeks.

The Internship will run from Friday, 26 July to Friday, 30 August, during which time the interns will rotate between five departments and visit several fire

stations across the country.

At the end of the internship, the interns will present back to Members, our Senior Leadership Team and other staff about their experience with the Service. I hope to see many of you there for what, based on previous years, will be both an informative and entertaining afternoon.

Meanwhile, the Service will also be welcoming interns as part of the Leonard Cheshire Change100 Scheme. The Change100 Scheme offers university students with a disability and a predicted grade of at least a 2:1 to do a three-month placement at one of Leonard Cheshire's partners.

The Service has proudly supported Change100 for several years and this year, we will be welcoming two interns from the Scheme.

The Chair asked Members to join him in welcoming all our new interns and in wishing them well during their time with the Service.

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

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

## 9. LED LIGHTING PRIORITY 2 PROJECT

Paul Brooks, Head of Assets (HoA) reported he was seeking Management Committee approval to release £225,000 from the capital expenditure budget to deliver LED Lighting Priority 2 Project. The funding would be from the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) and was part of the Fire Authority's commitment to reduce the Service's carbon footprint.

The sites identified for LED Priority 2 Project were Langley, Newbury, Caversham Road, Wokingham Road and Whitley Wood Fire Stations. Other sites identified in the report (RBFRS Headquarters, Wokingham, Bracknell, Caversham and Lambourn Fire Stations) will be assessed and delivered within other projects.

He stated LED lighting lasts longer and had proven wellbeing benefits reducing headaches and eye strains. He explained the project will be led by the Estates Team who had completed the planning and design. The installation will be completed by November 2024.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The capital expenditure budget of £0.225M for the delivery of the 'LED Lighting Priority 2 Project', as provided for in the SAIF be approved; and
- 2) That it be noted the delivery of this project will be concurrent with the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded element of the

RBFRS Sustainability Programme Phase 1 as approved by the Authority on 22 April 2024, but it is distinctly separate in respect of funding and governance.

## 10. ESTATES MINOR NEW WORKS CAPITAL SPEND APPROVAL

Paul Brooks, HoA, reported this report was seeking Management Committee approval to release £171,350 from the SAIF budget on four minor capital projects in Windsor, Wokingham, Lambourn and Mortimer Fire Stations. The works were to do the following:

- Windsor – replacing lighting with LED lighting, fixed fire alarm upgrades and to create a minimum standard for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) works without significant alterations to the building.
- Wokingham – EDI works and contamination control upgrades.
- Lambourn – fixed fire alarm installation
- Mortimer – fixed fire alarm installation

In discussing EDI works, he explained dignified facilities in line with the EDI Action Plan were planned for stations to meet individual needs, regardless of characteristics. The total of the planned works includes an 15% contingency and works will be managed by the Capital Projects Team. Subject to Management Committee approval the works will be completed by March 2025.

Paul Brooks confirmed subject to the condition of older buildings, the funding would be returned to the SAIF if the total amount is not used.

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

**RESOLVED** that the release of £171,350 from the SAIF to meet all the costs for estate related minor capital projects, as defined in 3.4. to cover professional services, design, planning, contractor costs and construction costs along with ancillary works and other fees be approved.

## 11. FLEET REPLACEMENT CAPITAL SPEND APPROVAL

Paul Brooks, HoA reported in July 2023, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) approved the intention to invest in appliances as part of its 10-year Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) and £2.87M was identified for this critical activity. This report was seeking Management Committee approval for capital expenditure up to £220,000 to replace fleet identified in Appendix A (page 39).

The first appliances listed in Appendix A will be delivered by the end of 2024 and a contingency had been built into the recommendation.

He stated the report was seeking to replace identified White Fleet only. Three Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) vehicles planned for replacement in 2024 will be

retained for an additional 12 months, saving £60,000.

Paul Brooks reported the Fleet Strategy will be presented to Management Committee this municipal year and will include plug-in hybrid vehicles. In relation to electric vehicles (EV), the infrastructure will need to be considered. Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) added he was not certain EV were as reliable for operational use.

The Chair moved the recommendation, and it was seconded by Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The capital expenditure of up to £220,000 over one year for the fleet assets as identified in Appendix A be approved; and
- 2) The budget request for the fleet requirements represents a 20% reduction on the forecasted SAIF 2024 provision be noted.

## **12. ICT HARDWARE REPLACEMENT**

Lukasz Wrona, Head of Business and Information Systems (HBIS) reported on 15 February 2024 the Fire Authority approved the SAIF which included the provision of £552,900 for the necessary investment in ICT hardware. He reported the following equipment had come to the end of its life and required replacing;

- Mobile phones
- Laptops
- Docking stations
- Desktop PCs

Lukasz Wrona added a transition to cloud migration from manual intervention would improve efficiency and ensure reliability of equipment.

Councillor McKenzie – Boyle queried whether old equipment was donated. Lukasz Wrona advised some equipment will be returned to suppliers in order to receive a rebate. Other equipment could be cleansed and donated to schools or charitable organisations.

The Chair requested for future reports to include a business case to identify the benefits and risks to the organisation. Lukasz Wrona agreed to include a business case in a future report.

The Chair moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The expenditure of £360,900 on end-user equipment listed in this report be approved; and
- 2) The expenditure of £192,000 on services required to deliver improvements to deployment system and migration of systems to the cloud be approved.

### 13. 2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER FOUR

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P) reported the revenue budget agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2023 was set at £41.975m. Income was set to exceed expenditure by £573,000 to allow for the replenishment of the Budget Contingency Reserve.

The Revenue Outturn for 2023/24 shows a surplus of £113,000 compared to budget. *Employee costs* – The overtime cost for wholetime stations was £260,000 over budget due to factors including cover for firefighter vacancies as well as additional water rescue training. The new Operational Support Team will continue to monitor overtime expenditure.

The Green book pay award was finalised (1 April 2023) at 5.4% against the original budget of 4%. The cost of new trainee firefighters was an additional budgetary pressure of £103,000. *Repairs and Maintenance* costs total variance of £355,000 including project costs related to LED lighting and EV charging points. In relation to *Premises Costs* – the Authority has made savings as a result of the falling price of gas. The *Communications* line was lower than budgeted by £117,000.

Increased interest rates resulted in additional investment income of £275,000 compared to the budgeted figure.

Appendix C provide an outline of quarter four capital projects and Appendix D lists the balance and movements on Reserves. The Treasury management activity is shown in Appendix E and show all treasury management operations have been conducted in full compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices.

In discussing the Reserves position, Appendix D, the Chair requested for an update on New Ways of Working at a future Management Committee. Conor reported Budget Working Party will be looking at New Ways of Working from the Transition Fund later in the year.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) The reserves position as set out in Appendix D be agreed.

**14. Q4 APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY**

Tom Brandon, Area Manager Response and Resilience (AM R&R) reported the Response Standard during the quarter was below target of 75% at 70.1%. He explained the response time included call out time, call handling and travel time and reported, the response standard was not met due to an increase in calls received following storm Henk. In addition, there was an increase in Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) calls requiring extended call challenge.

He stated it was expected the number of AFAs would reduce with greater confidence in call challenge by new Control operators. RBFRS was the only fire and rescue service in England to improve its attendance times at primary fires over a ten-year period, improving our average speed of response by 22 seconds, as reported in 2022/23.

Whole-time availability across the quarter was 97.8% against a stretched target of 99%. The factors were due to defects, training and staff sickness. This quarter has seen an improvement in On-call appliance availability of 41.5% against a target of 50%. Four out of five On-call stations have improved performance. In referring to Lambourn Fire Station, Tom Brandon stated two new joiners will start in quarter one 2024/25.

In response to the Chair's query of the current Lambourn figure of 1.7%, Tom Brandon reported he would confirm that figure.

AM (R&R)

The Vice-Chair stated he would like to see On-call stations met their target of 50%. In response to a supplementary question from the Vice-Chair, Tom Brandon reported the new AFA policy should simplify the call handling process and Members should see an improvement in call handling times.

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle commented on the increase in Crowthorne On-call availability. She requested that her appreciation to Tony Jell at Crowthorne Fire Station was passed on.

AM (R&R)

The Chair stated that he would like On-call availability to be discussed at the Recruitment and Retention Working Group meeting.

HHR&L&D

In response to a question from Councillor Frewer on whether the two new recruits in Lambourn would increase availability, Tom Brandon reported that it would take time for those new recruits to be operationally competent.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The 2023/24 quarter four performance of 97.8% appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances in line with Corporate Measure 14 be noted; and
- 2) The 2023/24 quarter four overall on-call appliance availability performance of 41.5%, in line with Corporate Measure 15 be noted.

**15. FORWARD PLAN**

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

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 8 October 2024 at 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

**17. 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.

**18. PART II MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting on 9 April 2024, be approved as a true record to be signed the Chair.

**19. INTERNET SERVICES WAIVER AND NEW NETWORK AND INTERNET SERVICES CONTRACT**

Lukasz Wrona (HBIS) reported the Internet Service Waiver and New Network and Internet Services Contract related to internet infrastructure. It included digital communication services provided to Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS).

The Chair asked whether a procurement exercise had been held. Lukasz Wrona reported that a public sector Framework, Crown Commercial Services (CCS) had been chosen to identify the best supplier/ contract.

The Chair requested to see more supporting evidence in future reporting.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report be agreed.

*(The meeting concluded at 7.44pm)*

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## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2024 - 2029</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>PAUL BROOKS, HEAD OF ASSETS</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR RACHELLE SHEPHERD DUBEY</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE AND AGREE</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is a covering document to apprise the Management Committee of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Sustainability Strategy 2024-2029.
- 1.2 RBFRS recognises the climate emergency and the social and economic issues that are creating an impact both globally and locally. This recognition has culminated in the production of the inaugural RBFRS Sustainability Strategy, which aims to be credible and deliverable.
- 1.3 The strategy is aligned with the corporate vision, and it supports the aims and key objectives of the organisation. More specifically it supports one of the Fire Authority's strategic commitments namely, *Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.*
- 1.4 RBFRS outlines its commitment to sustainability through four strategic themes. These themes provide a framework which builds on action already undertaken by RBFRS in these areas and prioritises aspects where we can have the greatest impact and action on the climate emergency in order to set the conditions for a more sustainable future. The themes are:
- Our people
  - Guardianship
  - Consumption reduction
  - Decarbonisation

## Agenda Item 8

- 1.5 The strategy is supported by an RBFRS Sustainable Development Policy Statement that is to be jointly signed by the RBFA Chair and the RBFRS Chief Fire Officer.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the RBFRS Sustainability Strategy 2024-2029; and
- 2.2 **AGREE** the RBFRS Sustainable Development Policy Statement for co-signature by the RBFA Chair and RBFRS Chief Fire Officer.

### **3. REPORT**

- 3.1 A credible and deliverable RBFRS Sustainability Strategy is essential to articulate how we aim to action and implement a more sustainable fire and rescue service to support the RBFRS strategic 'Commitment 5 – Sustainability'. This inaugural RBFRS Sustainability Strategy has its foundations in the signing of the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group Charter by RBFA on 15 February 2023 (minute reference 69).
- 3.2 The climate emergency is forcing fire and rescue services to adapt quickly to an escalating threat, requiring more resources, advanced training, and comprehensive strategies to protect lives, property, and the environment. There are several key challenges, including increased frequency and intensity of wildfires and increased risk of flooding, putting strain on resources and wellbeing.
- 3.3 The strategy has been developed with active stakeholder engagement across the organisation and it is aligned with the corporate vision, and supports the strategic aims and key objectives of the organisation:
- Fire stations at the heart of communities
  - Capacity, capability and resilience
  - One team working collaboratively for the people we serve
- 3.4 There are many definitions of sustainability, this is due to the myriad elements that it covers. Sustainability is often associated only with the environment, but its development covers far more issues and has been summarily defined in RBFRS workshop sessions as, "*creating resilient communities, taking action to be environmentally friendly and ensuring we are financially stable*".
- 3.5 Defining 'net zero' is equally complex, with the UK's broader definition referring to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere and the amount removed or offset. For the purposes of this strategy, net zero carbon has been defined as:

*"The carbon emissions associated with operational energy consumption across the estate and fleet are zero or negative on an annual basis. Most of*

*the fuel and power is supplied from on-site and off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance offset.”*

- 3.6 RBFRS outlines its commitment to sustainability through four strategic themes. These themes provide a framework which builds on action already undertaken by RBFRS in these areas and prioritises aspects where we can have the greatest impact and action on the climate emergency in order to set the conditions for a more sustainable future:
- 3.6.1 **Our People.** Collaborating with the stakeholders to promote sustainability and empower the sector, community and teams to reduce the impacts and create a sustainable future.
  - 3.6.2 **Guardianship.** Support and create a safer community by reducing wildfires, flooding and contaminants to protect the community and environment.
  - 3.6.3 **Consumption Reduction** – Conserve scarce natural materials through the reduction of RBFRS consumption.
  - 3.6.4 **Decarbonisation** – Reduce the amount of carbon emissions produced by RBFRS and to prevent additional carbon emissions affecting the climate.
- 3.7 To ensure credibility, wider alignment and a holistic approach, the production of the strategy has included mapping our current activities to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The SDGs are useful because they were created to standardise targets for governments to meet, addressing the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges that are prevalent in today's society.
- 3.8 During the development of the strategy, staff from all departments were given the opportunity to identify their current progress towards sustainability and where they would like to be in the next 5 years. This important piece of consultation has resulted in a draft non-committal officer level roadmap for development over the coming months which can be split into deliverable projects ranging from quick wins to larger scale investments.
- 3.9 From a governance and reporting perspective, Progress will be reported internally monthly to the Estate Management Group and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), quarterly to the RBFA Members' Estate Development and Sustainability Working Group and six-monthly to the RBFA Management Committee. External reporting will be via the RBFRS Annual Report to update external stakeholders on our performance over the year. Progress will also be continually monitored by the RBFRS Sustainability Co-ordinator, and a meeting held quarterly with key internal stakeholders to review practical progress.

**4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

4.1 **Sustainability.** We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.

4.2 **People.** We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with the strategy, although procuring sustainable technologies might increase costs in the future. Where practicable, the aim is to manage inflationary risk within the financial headroom of the SAIF and revenue budgets.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 We are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for all our employees and the wider community. An equality impact assessment has been raised to cover the development and implementation of this strategy. EDI has been and will continue to be, a core part of the development of every sustainability related initiative.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 If RFBRs does not have an appropriate strategy in place for sustainability, there is a risk of not meeting UK Government and internationally agreed targets.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1 Opportunities using collaboration with partners and other FRS to develop and deliver sustainability initiatives will always be explored and exploited if beneficial.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Head of Finance and Procurement were consulted during preparation of this report.

10.2 The RBFA Lead Member for Strategic Assets and Monitoring Officer were consulted during preparation of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Emergency Services Sustainability Charter – Fire Authority Agenda and Minutes, Item 14, 15 February 2023.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 RBFRS Sustainability Strategy 2024-2029 – Appendix A  
12.2 RBFRS Sustainable Development Policy Statement – Appendix B

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Paul Brooks, Head of Assets (Estates, Fleet & Equipment),  
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# Sustainability Strategy 2024-2029



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## Foreword

*Councillor Shepherd DuBey, RBFA Lead Member for Strategic Assets, September 2024*



Welcome to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority’s (RBFA) Sustainability Strategy 2024 – 2029. I am excited to be introducing this important new document, which sets out, in strategic terms, the aims and objectives of what Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) aims to achieve over the next five years with regards to sustainability.

We recognise the climate emergency and the social and economic issues that we are facing, along with its impact, both globally and locally across communities in Royal Berkshire. This strategy explains how we aim to tackle our contribution to climate change through cultural change and the delivery of various initiatives and projects. We have developed a roadmap for achieving our future goals that will be developed over the life of the strategy. This strategy sets out what sustainability means to the service and how we prioritise our commitment to reducing our impact on the planet whilst continuing to protect the communities we serve. It explains not only the importance of our work, but also why we need to do it and how we intend to achieve it. The plan will also set out how we intend to measure our effectiveness in meeting our objectives and evaluate our success. In the development of the strategy, we recognise that there has already been a huge amount of effort towards targeting some of the issues identified, including our response to adverse weather conditions and the economic challenges faced in our communities.

If we do not strive for change, we will continue to face these challenges, which is why we are focusing on working closely with our local communities, businesses, and partner agencies to deliver a first-rate service. By working collaboratively, we hope to share the importance of sustainability across the sector and communities. This would not be possible if it were not for the most important asset we have at our disposal – our people. Our staff and the people we serve are at the heart of the sustainability strategy, we would be unable to deliver our commitments without the hard work and dedication of our staff and the willingness to learn and deliver our new initiatives.

Our approach to sustainability covers a wide range of elements and it is necessarily ambitious. By launching this strategy, we are making our commitment to sustainability and a low carbon future clear. We recognise that there will be challenges in delivering our plans, however we intend to sustain our ‘One Team for Berkshire’ approach and integrate sustainability across all elements of the service making it an organisational priority.



## Executive summary

RBFRS recognises the climate emergency and the social and economic issues that are creating an impact both globally and locally. This recognition has culminated in the production of the inaugural RBFRS Sustainability Strategy, which aims to be credible and deliverable. RBFRS outlines its commitment to sustainability through four strategic themes. These themes provide a framework which builds on action already undertaken by RBFRS in these areas and prioritises aspects where we can have the greatest impact and action on the climate emergency in order to set the conditions for a more sustainable future.

### Our sustainability strategic themes:

1. **Our People** – Collaborating with the stakeholders to promote sustainability and empower the sector, community and teams to reduce the impacts and create a sustainable future.
2. **Guardianship** – Support and create a safer community by reducing wildfires, flooding and contaminants to protect the community and environment.
3. **Consumption Reduction** – Conserve scarce natural materials through the reduction of RBFRS consumption.
4. **Decarbonisation** – Reduce the amount of carbon emissions produced by RBFRS and to prevent additional carbon emissions affecting the climate.

This strategy sets out how we aim to action and implement a more sustainable fire and rescue service to support the key RBFRS strategic commitment:

**Commitment 5: Sustainability.** *We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.*

This strategy is supported by an RBFRS Sustainable Development Policy Statement that has been jointly signed by the RBFA Chair and the RBFRS Chief Fire Officer.



## Introduction

This is the inaugural RBFRS Sustainability Strategy that has its foundations in the signing of the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group Charter by RBFA in February 2023. Climate change was identified as a risk some time ago stimulating UK Fire & Rescue Services to adapt to and mitigate as a sector. More widely, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is placing greater emphasis on work in this area.

Over the last two decades, fire and rescue services have responded to a growing number of emergency incidents linked to climate change, such as flooding, wildfire, heatwaves, landslides, sink holes, high-intensity storms and high winds. They have done this by primarily deploying and coordinating their existing resources, skills and equipment not only to support stricken communities in their times of need but also to help their multi-agency partners with areas of their priority work in order to better manage the crisis overall.

Page 28 Sustainability is not a stand-alone component or objective and it cuts across everything we do as an organisation driving the need for a corporate wide, cross functional approach that is enabled and supported by an appropriate strategy that is not constrained or siloed. Noting this, the strategy is intended for a wide audience including:

- Members of the Fire Authority – to support decisions on investment priorities and the annual revision of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – to identify portfolio changes to meet the needs of the Service and to maintain consideration of property assets in everything we do
- Public – it provides a statement of RBFRS’s property asset management practices and priorities, putting community accessible fire stations at the heart of the communities they serve
- RBFRS Staff – to support engagement, innovation and delivery of the initiatives and actions outlined within the strategy



## What Is sustainability to us?

There are many definitions of sustainability, this is due to the varied elements that it covers. Sustainability is often associated only with the environment, but its development covers far more issues. Sustainable development is defined by the United Nations (UN) as:

*“Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

*Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet. For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected, and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies.*

*Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. To this end, there must be promotion of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.”*

Source: United Nations

*“Sustainability is creating resilient communities, taking action to be environmentally friendly and ensuring we are financially stable.”*

Source: RBFRS sustainability workshop June 2024

RBFRS is viewing sustainability and its development in a broader sense, capturing the three core elements as stated by the UN. These are:

- Economic growth
- Social inclusion
- Environmental protection



## Defining net zero

From a macro perspective, the UK's broader definition of 'net zero' refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere and the amount removed or offset. Achieving net zero means that any emissions produced by human activities, such as industry, transportation, and agriculture, are balanced by an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases being removed through natural processes (like tree planting) or technological solutions (such as carbon capture and storage).

Key points of the UK's net zero strategy include:

1. **Reduction of emissions:** The primary goal is to significantly reduce emissions across all sectors of the economy, including energy, transport, agriculture, and industry. This involves increasing energy efficiency, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and adopting low-carbon technologies.
2. **Carbon offsetting:** For emissions that are difficult to eliminate entirely, the UK plans to use methods like reforestation and carbon capture and storage to offset the remaining emissions.
3. **2050 Target:** The UK has legally committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. This target was set to align with global efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
4. **Economic and social transition:** The UK's net zero strategy also involves transitioning the economy to be more sustainable, which includes supporting industries, creating green jobs, and ensuring that the transition is fair and inclusive for all communities. By reaching net zero, the UK aims to reduce its impact on climate change, contributing to global efforts to mitigate the effects of rising temperatures and environmental degradation.

For the purposes of this strategy, Net Zero Carbon has been defined as:

*“The carbon emissions associated with operational energy consumption across the estate and fleet are zero or negative on an annual basis. Most of the fuel and power is supplied from on-site and off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance offset.”*



## Benefits

There are many benefits to acting in a more sustainability conscious way that are both financial and non-financial.

Adopting sustainable practices and technologies can significantly **reduce operational and energy costs**. By improving efficiency across the estate, tackling consumption and reducing waste, over time can lower costs. Another key action in this area is to ensure sustainable procurement and address scope 3 emissions.

By implementing sustainable practices and technologies this can significantly **reduce our carbon production**, therefore benefiting the planet and contributing to **reducing the impact of the climate emergency**.

Addressing social inclusion by promoting equality, diversity and inclusion will allow for accessible opportunities within the community which will help **support engagement, recruitment and retention**.

Employees want to work for services that align with their values. A strong commitment to sustainability can **boost workplace morale and inspire innovation**.

By using companies that employ, locally, resource responsibility and invest in community development it will help to support **decent work and economic growth benefiting the community**.

As sustainability and the climate emergency become more prevalent, it is likely that regulations will become stricter. In embracing sustainability, we can **stay ahead of regulations and compliance changes**.



## Context

### The impact on our service

The climate emergency is forcing fire and rescue services to adapt quickly to an escalating threat, requiring more resources, advanced training and comprehensive strategies to protect lives, property, and the environment. There are several key challenges, as represented in **Figure 1**, but they include:

**Increased frequency and intensity of wildfires.** Due to rising global temperatures, prolonged droughts, and changing weather patterns, wildfires are becoming more frequent, intense, and widespread.

**Increased risk of flooding.** Changing weather patterns are also leading to higher intensity rainfall increasing the risk of flooding events, especially in the Thames Valley area.

**Resource strain.** The increased demand for firefighting efforts, both in terms of personnel and equipment, places a heavy burden on us, meaning we must be prepared year-round, leading to higher operational costs and potential shortages of equipment and personnel.

**Health and safety risks.** Firefighters face greater health risks due to exposure to extreme heat, smoke, and hazardous materials during prolonged wildfire or flooding events. The physical and mental toll on firefighters is increasing, requiring better health support and mental health resources.

**Infrastructure and preparedness.** The changing climate necessitates investment in infrastructure and technology to improve response times and efficiency. This includes upgrading equipment to handle more severe fire and flooding conditions.

**Community preparedness and education.** We play a crucial role in educating communities about fire prevention and evacuation procedures, and water safety. The increased risk requires ongoing public awareness campaigns and collaboration with local authorities to improve community resilience.



**Collaboration.** The scale of modern wildfires and flooding often exceeds the capacity of an individual fire service, necessitating greater collaboration and mutual aid between regional and national fire and rescue services.



Figure 1 – The impact of climate change on RBFRS.



## The UN Sustainable Development Goals

In November 2022, ahead of COP27<sup>1</sup>, the UK joined the Net Zero Government Initiative as a partner and signatory. This Initiative is led by the United States and participants agreed to develop and publish a roadmap laying out how they would bring their government emissions to net zero by 2050

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) were created to standardise targets for governments to meet, addressing the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges that are prevalent in today's society. The goals produced address sustainability in its wider format and capture more than just carbon and environmental impacts.

In the production of this strategy, we have mapped our current activities against the SDGs which are portrayed in **Figure 2**.



Figure 2 – The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>1</sup> 'Conference of the Parties' – the countries who signed up to the original UN Climate Agreement in 1992 [COP27: Delivering for people and the planet | United Nations / https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/cop27](https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/cop27)



## Our corporate vision

Our Vision Wheel (**Figure 3**) has been developed in advance of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), as a simple way to represent how we will all deliver services within our communities. This has been developed through consulting staff and members of the public, many of whom believed it was vital that we placed our community at the heart of all that we do. We want to continually focus on the relationships we have with our communities, to inspire trust, confidence and pride in their service and encourage people from all communities to want to join us. Several other themes were also identified as being important to our staff and the public.

We intend to deliver the four quadrants of our public-facing work: our Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience services through our four overarching principles: **Sustainability**, Culture, Capability and Risk Management. We will maintain these areas as a key priority over the next four years.



Figure 3 – RBFRS vision wheel.



## Our sustainability vision

Our vision is to build a more sustainable service to reduce the impact of the organisations operations on the environment and reduce carbon emissions in line with the United Kingdom Government’s commitment. This strategy will strive to continually improve its performance based on sustainability.

We will:

- Act in a way that meets governmental targets and supports our local communities to strive for a more sustainable future
- Achieve the sustainable development targets set by Government policy with set check in points to review progression
- Review this statement annually and revise it where necessary based upon our commitments and targets
- Report on our performance
- Meet all relevant current and foreseen statutory regulations and official codes of practice
- Focus our efforts on key areas of opportunity as led by our Strategic Themes
- Regularly Monitor progress and strive for continual improvement
- Lead the conversation on sustainability and provide staff with the knowledge, support and resources to make positive departmental changes



## Strategic themes

To enable us to speak in one language and to make the strategy accessible, impactful and actionable, we have formed themes in which projects and actions can be connected. The themes have been selected based on the work that is currently being undertaken by the service and benchmarked against the UN SDGs.

The themes are:

- Our people
- Guardianship
- Consumption reduction
- Decarbonisation

During the production of the strategy, we have consulted with staff from all departments and at varying levels to ensure we have captured input and perspective from everyone.

An accompanying specific and separate action roadmap helps track our progress against UN SDGs and our strategic themes, in more detail.



## Theme 1 – Our People

This theme addresses collaboration with stakeholders to promote sustainability and empower the sector, community and teams. This will help to reduce impact and create a sustainable future through communication, learning and development.

People are at the heart of RBFRS, crews, departments and local communities, so introducing sustainability and encouraging buy-in and innovation are key to the success of this strategy.

Education and learning are essential in engagement of the subject matter. RBFRS already facilitates education and learning through two streams.

UN SDGs related to the 'Our People' theme are:



### Current relevant strategies and documents

- People Strategy
- Health Safety and Wellbeing Strategy
- RBFRS Purpose and Vision
- RBFRS Behavioural Competency Framework
- HMICFRS Values and Culture Action Plan
- RBFRS EDI Objectives



## Theme 2 – Guardianship

This theme is addressing the support and creation of a safer community and environment by reducing wildfires, flooding and contaminants. Due to the climate emergency.

The environment is changing because of the current climate emergency – this is leading to more wildfires, more flooding, and more extreme conditions. As a result, this is driving more response and rescue operations, more education around safety and more general resource. This directly impacts the services provided by RBFRS and is necessary to support the strategic commitments.

UN SDGs related to the ‘Guardianship’ theme are:

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### Current relevant strategies and documents

- Corporate Plan
- Community Risk Management Plan
- Integrated Service Delivery Strategy



### Theme 3 – Consumption Reduction

This theme addresses consumption and how we can conserve scarce natural materials. Reducing and preventing waste is the first step to reducing the overall carbon footprint of the service. This includes addressing our supply chain through procurement and contract management.

UN SDGs related to the ‘Consumption Reduction’ theme are:



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#### Current relevant strategies and documents

- Annual Report
- Annual Plan
- Quarterly performance reports
- HMICFRS inspection reports

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## Theme 4 – Decarbonisation

This theme addresses how we can reduce the amount of carbon produced by RBFRS and prevent additional carbon emissions affecting the climate. This can be done through implementing new sustainable technologies and improving site efficiencies. We will continue to operate, manage and develop our estate and operations to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions<sup>2</sup>.

The decarbonisation theme is also key to achieving the government commitment to reach net zero by 2050. Although the other themes carry a huge amount of importance in improving sustainability within the service, it is crucial that we address our carbon output by decarbonising our estate and, where practicable, our fleet. The over production of carbon in the atmosphere is the leading cause of the climate emergency.

UN SDGs related to the ‘Decarbonisation’ theme are:

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### Relevant strategies and documents

- Strategic Asset Investment Framework
- Property Asset Management Plan
- Fleet and Equipment Strategy

<sup>2</sup> Scope 1 are those direct emissions that are owned or controlled by a company, whereas scope 2 and 3 indirect emissions are a consequence of the activities of the company but occur from sources not owned or controlled by it. See: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/stories/energy-explained/what-are-scope-1-2-3-carbon-emissions>



## The RBFRS Draft Sustainability Roadmap

It is important in this strategy that there is clear route to our goals and targets. During this initial development of the strategy, staff from all departments were given the opportunity to identify their current progress towards sustainability and where they would like to be in the next 5 years. This important piece of consultation has resulted in a draft roadmap that will be used by the RBFRS sustainability team to consider like projects ranging from quick wins to larger scale investments, which could be delivered depending on resource availability and capacity. Notably, the roadmap is currently a desk level planning document and is not an indelible commitment in terms of resources, hence it is not included here.

## Governance and reporting

RBFRS adheres to a strict governance and reporting framework to ensure that we are informing all key stakeholders on progress, taking direction from our overarching leadership and using the correct decision-making channels to align with our commitments. Progress will be reported internally monthly to the Estate Management Group and SLT, quarterly to the RBFA Members' Estate Development and Sustainability Working Group and six-monthly to the RBFA Management Committee. External reporting will be via the RBFRS Annual Report to update external stakeholders on our performance over the year.

## Monitoring and evaluation

RBFRS will be working in line with UK Government targets which is currently to be Net Zero by 2050. With this in mind, we also acknowledge that this target is 25 years away and that if we can achieve this any quicker, we will aim to do so. Our main target for this strategy is to seek continual improvement against what could be a moving baseline. To achieve this, progress will be continually monitored by the RBFRS Sustainability Co-ordinator, and a meeting held quarterly with key internal stakeholders to review progress. In order for this strategy to be effective we will strive to keep the roadmap updated to ensure that we are accounting for new technologies, opportunities and learnings.



Figure 4 – RBFRS Sustainability monitoring and evaluation.



**Appendix 1 – UN Sustainable Development Goals Statement**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We provide accessible career opportunities</li> <li>We provide equal rights to resources</li> <li>We aim to empower disadvantaged groups through training programmed and ensuring that our recruitment process does not exclude marginalised groups</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have committed to delivering solar PV projects in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have introduced the use of a service 'marketplace' to reduce items going to landfill</li> <li>We are addressing our consumption of materials and resources through various contracts. This is not at gold standard, but conversations and small changes have been made.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We work with local community food banks and homeless shelters through volunteering and donations</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We invest in the education and training of our staff</li> <li>We provide fair wages and good working conditions</li> <li>We are always working to create new and better work opportunities</li> <li>We provide equal pay for work of equal value</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are in the process of delivering a heat decarbonisation project to remove fossil fuels from several sites and lower emissions.</li> <li>We are transitioning several fleet vehicles to electric</li> <li>We are starting to further promote climate conscious behaviour through our processes</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are providing resource and access for staff to various healthcare and wellbeing services</li> <li>Employing a health and wellbeing manager to support staff and ensure information is relevant and up to date</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to upgrading current infrastructure and retro-fitting infrastructure to promote asset longevity</li> <li>For any new build projects, research and deploy sustainable infrastructure. (Example using a modular building for our new training centre.)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the decontamination and environmental protection initiative, undertake assessments at incidents to reduce the amount of water pollution.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the learning and development team, we provide all staff with equal opportunity to educational resources and provide essential training surrounding core skills to all employees</li> <li>We provide quality education to communities by educating them on fire safety and the fire service</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting equality of opportunity through recruitment and promoting process</li> <li>Ensuring that the services we provide are accessible to everyone including disadvantaged and marginalised groups. This may be through learning and education or through training</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have reduced the use of paper-based products and have introduced systems to reduce the need for printing.</li> <li>We follow BREEAM regulations in new build projects and ensure to conduct ecology surveys for the preservation of existing habitat</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have addressed site specific issues on stations to ensure all facilities are inclusive and where the gold standard is not possible, making adaptations to ensure they are suitable</li> <li>Support and promote female leadership and female firefighters within the service</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through community engagement, educate people on access to services.</li> <li>Providing designated community fire stations and safe areas for locals to utilise when they are needed.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We promote transparency and accountability through our reporting channels. This ensures open governance, fair resource allocation and clear communication to allow us to build trust with all stakeholders</li> <li>We collaborate with authorities and services for knowledge sharing and support continual improvement within the sector</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect water based eco systems by assessing incidents and avoiding contaminants running into local bodies of water</li> </ul>				

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

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

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## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT



The Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Senior Leadership Team of Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) recognise the climate emergency and the social and economic issues that we are facing, along with its impact, both globally and locally across communities in Royal Berkshire. We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable service and to take action to help address the climate emergency.

Further, we will reduce the impact of the organisation's operations on the environment and minimising its carbon footprint. We will do so in a way that supports the United Kingdom's commitment to sustainable development and reducing the effects of climate change. This statement will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary.

RBFRS will strive to continually improve its environmental performance by:

- Meeting all relevant current and foreseen statutory regulations and official codes of practice, using passive low energy and low carbon systems wherever practicable.
- Achieving the sustainable development targets set by UK Government policy.
- Conserving energy, water, paper and other resources - particularly those which are scarce or non-renewable.
- Reducing waste through re-use and recycling and by using reconditioned and recycled products and materials where such appropriate alternatives are available.
- Phasing out ozone depleting substances and minimising the release of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds, vehicle emissions and other substances damaging to health and the environment.
- Monitoring discharges and emissions to air, land and water and assessing the actions necessary to reduce pollution or the risk of pollution.
- Guiding and motivating staff, through education and training, to work in an environmentally responsible manner and to play a full part in developing new ideas and initiatives.
- Expecting users and stakeholders to take responsible action in terms of environmentally sustainable best practice.
- Requiring partners, contractors and subcontractors to meet best practise as a condition of working with them.
- Effectively communicating to stakeholders and users the environmental policy framework that operates at RBFRS and demonstrating the efforts taken to minimise its impact on the environment.
- Communicating environmental policies and best practice to all staff, partners and contractors and co-operating with others in the public and private sectors to develop and promote environmentally sound practices.
- Operating in a responsible and co-operative manner with local communities.
- Actively seeking ways to reduce carbon emissions in all that we do – including the introduction of measurable targets for reduction.

To demonstrate our commitment to sustainable development RBFRS's Annual Report and website will include details of environmental performance.

As Chair RBFA and CFO RBFRS we will ensure that we take the appropriate actions to achieve these aims and thereby contribute to the wellbeing of the organisation and the environment.

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FLEET &amp; EQUIPMENT STRATEGY 2024 - 2029</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>PAUL BROOKS, HEAD OF ASSETS</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>CLLR RACHELLE SHEPHERD DUBEY</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is a covering document to apprise the Management Committee of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2024-2029.
- 1.2 This new strategy sets out how we will provide resilient fleet and equipment that effectively meets organisational requirements, informed by risk, and achieved in a cost-effective way. The strategy will provide the framework for the necessary supporting infrastructure to provide the technical and operational capability to support and implement delivery plans arising from the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Corporate Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF).
- 1.3 The strategy is aligned with the corporate vision, and it supports the strategic aims and key objectives of the organisation: Fire stations at the heart of communities; capacity, capability and resilience; one team working collaboratively for the people we serve.
- 1.4 There are six key principles underpinning the strategic intent: cost effectiveness, reliability and resilience, quality, adaptability, sustainability, innovation. These principles are supported by critical enablers ranging from people (as stakeholders and for learning / development), through to prudent financial planning and data management.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the RBFRS Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2024-2029.

### 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 A coherent and credible RBFRS Fleet and Equipment Strategy is essential to articulate how we will provide resilient assets that effectively meets organisational requirements, informed by risk, and achieved in a cost-effective way. It provides the framework to enable the infrastructure for the technical and operational capability to support and implement delivery plans arising from the CRMP, Corporate Plan and SAIF.
- 3.2 The strategy is aligned with the corporate vision, and it supports the strategic aims and key objectives of the organisation:
- Fire stations at the heart of communities
  - Capacity, capability and resilience
  - One team working collaboratively for the people we serve
- 3.3 There are six key principles underpinning the strategic intent, supported by critical enablers and pathways to ensure credibility and deliverability:
- 3.3.1 **Cost effectiveness.** Value for money will be prioritised without compromising safety or emergency response capabilities.
- 3.3.2 **Reliability and resilience.** Fleet and equipment assets will be maintained to the highest standards to guarantee reliability and longevity. Regular inspections, servicing, and repairs will be conducted in compliance with best practices and manufacturer recommendations.
- 3.3.3 **Quality.** We will engage with ‘customers’, other end users (FRS), and the wider market to ensure we deliver the quality of fleet and equipment required to meet their needs, avoiding repeating avoidable mistakes and benefit from the lessons identified by others and utilising market expertise
- 3.3.4 **Adaptability.** We will use flexible designs that can accommodate new technologies and equipment as service needs evolve. The use of modular loads and standard stowage patterns will enable the rapid provision of spare and replacement vehicles.
- 3.3.5 **Sustainability.** We will transition to alternative fuels and technologies with the associated infrastructure investments, balanced against cost and the need for reliability and our operational imperatives.
- 3.3.6 **Innovation.** We have a willingness to explore and adopt new products and technologies when they offer benefits but ensure that they are implemented for a defined user need and are supported by appropriate doctrine and training.
- 3.4 **Governance.** The strategy highlights that robust governance is critical, with the SAIF providing the overarching framework that sets the course of our work across all capital assets. The SAIF provides a greater narrative around asset investment and the decision-making process and is supported by the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). It recognises the importance of our

valuable fleet and equipment assets and the need to invest in them, so they remain fit for purpose, sustainable and affordable.

- 3.5 In line with seeking a more holistic, collaborative and informed approach to governance, a Fleet and Equipment Management Group will be introduced by March 2025, chaired by the Head of Assets and closely supported by the Fleet & Equipment Manager. This mirrors the approach with our property and the purpose of the group will be to foster a close working relationship between all fleet and equipment users, to oversee projects and to provide an essential opportunity for engagement and discussions on key fleet and equipment matters.
- 3.6 **Collaboration.** We recognise that can provide more efficient and effective Fleet Services through greater collaboration with our partners and stakeholders, including, but not limited to Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services. We intend to optimise the existing fleet maintenance Joint Working Agreement (JWA) with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service as a key collaborative partnership that has been running for 10 years, realising financial savings and other benefits for both parties whilst maintaining a high level of quality across fleet maintenance.
- 3.7 Opportunities to collaborate further will always be explored and are not limited to the Fire and Rescue Sector, especially in complex and emergent areas like sustainability and data. For the former, and so far as reasonably practicable, we will prioritise the procurement of low, and zero emissions vehicles and equipment. In the data arena, we will actively consider technology like telematics to improve driving culture and realise efficiencies where possible.

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

- 4.1 **Response.** We will ensure that our people are trained and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.2 **Resilience.** We will ensure our resilience and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.3 **Sustainability.** We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.4 **People.** We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

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

- 5.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with the strategy, although procuring sustainable technologies might increase costs in the

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future. Where practicable, the aim is to manage inflationary risk within the financial headroom of the SAIF and revenue budgets.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

7.1 We are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for all our employees and the wider community. An equality impact assessment has been raised to cover the development and implementation of this strategy. Every fleet and equipment asset used by members of the organisation needs to reflect their unique and individual needs.

7.2 EDI has been and will continue to be, a core part of the development of every technical specification produced by the Fleet and Equipment Team. By listening closely to end users and the widest possible range of representative bodies, the team will maximise the opportunities to bring in the assets that are suitable for use by the widest range of people possible.

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 If RFBRS does have an appropriate strategy in place to manage critical assets, there is risk of increased failures, increased costs and technological fade.

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

9.1 As indicated earlier, opportunities using collaboration with partners and other FRS to improve efficiency and/or effectiveness of the fleet and equipment will always be explored and exploited if beneficial.

### **10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Head of Finance and Procurement were consulted during preparation of this report.

10.2 The RBFA Lead Member for Strategic Assets and Monitoring Officer were consulted during preparation of this report.

### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 RFBRS Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2024-2029 – ISSUED SEPARATELY.

### **12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Included in the strategy.

### **13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Paul Brooks, Head of Assets (Estates, Fleet & Equipment),  
[brooksp@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:brooksp@rbfrs.co.uk)
- 13.2 GM Rob Read, Fleet & Equipment Manager, [readr@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:readr@rbfrs.co.uk)

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# Fleet and Equipment Management Strategy

2024 – 2029



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## Foreword

This 5-year Fleet and Equipment Management Strategy (FEMS) provides a high-level statement of the overall approach to providing fleet and equipment to meet the needs of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFRA). It is a business planning and communication document which considers fleet and equipment assets as just one of the many corporate resources needed by the Service to deliver its essential emergency response to the people who live and work within the county of Berkshire.

Like the people who use them, fleet and equipment assets need to be flexible and agile, so we must be proactive in managing these valuable assets, so that we develop a future focused portfolio. This Strategy identifies the extent of the fleet and equipment portfolio owned by the Authority, our approach to asset management, what we have and its condition.

Through the adoption of best practice and collaboration in everything we do, the Service seeks to make best use of the assets and investment available to achieve its objectives.

*Councillor Shepherd DuBey, RBFRA Lead Member for Strategic Assets, September 2024*



## 1. Introduction

This strategy sets out how we provide a highly resilient fleet that effectively meets organisational requirements, informed by risk, and achieved in a cost-effective way. This strategy will provide the framework for the necessary supporting infrastructure to provide the technical and operational capability to support and implement delivery plans arising from the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Corporate Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework.

This strategy supports the strategic aims and key objectives of the organisation:

- **Fire stations at the heart of communities** – We are providing suitable assets that can be utilised effectively and efficiently to support our local communities.
- **Capacity, capability and resilience** – Assets that are efficient, effective, resilient and deliver what is needed from them.
- **One team working collaboratively for the people we serve** – Having modern and fit-for-purpose assets aligned with our Thames Valley neighbours and other partners thereby improving the delivery of emergency services to the local communities as well as reducing the impact on the public purse.

The strategy is necessary to ensure:

- We enable our people to work safely and efficiently
- We deliver a coordinated and efficient provision of fleet and equipment across the whole service
- Development of stakeholder lead plans for the provision of fleet and equipment
- The efficient delivery of maintenance
- The organisation has effective access to necessary technical support and capability
- Ongoing improvement in organisational resilience
- Environmental impact reduction
- Compliance with statutory regulation

## 2. Vision

Our Vision Wheel (**Figure 1**) has been developed in alignment with the CRMP, as a simple way to represent how we will all deliver our services within our communities. This has been developed through consulting staff and members of the public, many of whom believed it was vital that we placed our community at the heart of all that we do. We want to continually focus on the relationships we have with our communities, to inspire trust, confidence and pride in their Service and encourage people from all communities to want to join us. Several other themes were also identified as being important to our staff and the public.

We intend to deliver the four quadrants of our public-facing work: our Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience services through our four overarching

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principles: Sustainability, Culture, Capability and Risk Management. We will maintain these areas as a key priority over the next four years.



Figure 1 – RBFRS vision wheel.

Our fleet and equipment vision is to build an asset base that epitomises safety, efficiency, and adaptability, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of the organisation and the communities we serve. We are committed to providing reliable, and robust vehicles that enhance operational readiness and firefighter safety, benefitting from continuing technological progress. Our fleet will be designed and maintained to the highest standards in support of excellent reliability, leveraging innovative technologies and sustainable practices to maximize performance and, where appropriate, minimise environmental impact.

We will focus on delivering exceptional value for money by optimising procurement processes, ensuring cost-effective maintenance, and extending the lifespan of our assets through proactive asset management. Flexibility will be at the core of our fleet strategy, enabling us to swiftly respond to changing risk profiles and emerging challenges.

By fostering strong partnerships with suppliers and stakeholders, we will stay abreast of industry advancements and regulatory requirements, ensuring our fleet benefits from, and forms part of, the leading edge of emergency response capabilities.

Through continuous training and development, we will empower our personnel to effectively utilise our fleet, enhancing their safety and operational effectiveness. Our commitment is to provide a fleet that not only meets but exceeds the expectations of our organisation and the communities we protect, today and into the future.

### 3. Strategic intent

#### 3.1 Cost-Effectiveness

We will prioritise value for money without compromising safety or emergency response capabilities. In all other provisions we will take a proportionate approach that balances risk and cost to ensure excellent value for the public purse.

#### 3.2 Reliability & Resilience

Ensure fleet assets are maintained to the highest standards to guarantee reliability and longevity. We will maintain fleet assets to high standards to ensure their reliability and longevity. Regular inspections, servicing, and repairs will be conducted in compliance with best practices and manufacturer recommendations.

#### 3.3 Quality

Engage with stakeholders to ensure the fleet meets quality requirements and avoids repeating past mistakes. We will engage with 'customers', other end users (FRS) and the wider market to ensure we deliver the quality of fleet and equipment required to meet their need, avoid repeating avoidable mistakes and benefit from the lessons identified by others and utilise market expertise.

#### 3.4 Adaptability

Implement flexible vehicle designs and embrace collaboration to adapt to evolving service needs and new technologies. We will use flexible vehicle designs that can accommodate new technologies and equipment as service needs evolve. The use of modular loads and standard stowage patterns will enable the rapid provision of spare and replacement vehicles.

#### 3.5 Sustainability

Transition towards alternative fuels and invest in associated infrastructure, balancing cost and reliability considerations. We will transition to alternative fuels with the associated infrastructure investments, balanced against cost and the need for reliability and our operational imperatives.

#### 3.6 Innovation

Foster a culture of innovation, exploring and adopting new technologies and practices to optimise fleet management. We have a willingness to explore and adopt new products and technologies when they offer benefits but ensure that they are implemented for a defined user need and are supported by appropriate doctrine and training.

### 4. Meeting the strategic intent

#### 4.1 Critical enablers

- **Financial planning and budgeting.** Develop robust processes to align fleet replacement with service needs and priorities. Maximise the use of each fleet asset while minimising its whole-life cost. Have a long term funded replacement programme matched to a replacement profile driven by asset quality rather than a fixed measurement such as age.

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- **Increased sustainability.** Evolve a well-structured transition plan, including infrastructure development and staff training to achieve environmental sustainability goals aligned to the Fire Authority's Sustainability Strategy
- **Data management and technology.** Implement a comprehensive data management system and leverage technology for optimised fleet operations.
- **Stakeholder engagement.** Establish and nurture strong relationships with stakeholders to ensure the fleet strategy meets their needs.
- **Staff development.** Invest in continuous training and development to equip the staff with the necessary skills and expertise to manage and maintain and operate the fleet effectively.
- **Maintenance and repairs.** Minimise fleet downtime through efficient maintenance and repair processes, including 24/7 support. Utilising partnerships with other emergency service fleet providers will enable an effective response to operational vehicle maintenance.

#### 4.2 Pathways

- **Procurement.** Maximise efficiency and effectiveness of the procurement processes for new vehicles by utilising frameworks and collaborating with partners to expedite asset acquisition.
- **Maintenance and repairs.** Put in place appropriate contracts for fleet maintenance, recovery and repair utilising a wide range of providers matched to the operational and business risk associated with each vehicle type.
- **Vehicle design and standards.** Procure vehicles that meet or exceed relevant sector standards, incorporating user-led design, operational learning and new technologies.
- **Risk management.** Proactively identify and manage risks associated with fleet management, such as accidents, fuel disruptions and obsolescence. Use the outcomes of risk management processes to inform the future design and delivery of fleet and equipment. Actively ensure that the organisational risk profile information is incorporated into fleet planning and design.
- **Data and Technology.** Leverage data and technology for improved asset management, decision-making, and performance monitoring. Use this data to inform budget and planning cycles.

### 5. Operational context, change and aims

#### 5.1 Operational context

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) serves the six unitary authorities within Royal Berkshire (Bracknell Forest, Reading, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough, West Berkshire and Wokingham). The service covers 1,263 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of just under 1 million people.

The county has a diverse range of risks ranging from the M4 motorway, river Thames, Great Western Railway to the historic royal residence of Windsor Castle. The county is home to several densely populated towns and large areas of productive agricultural and forested land. Due to the county's position and good transport links to London, population and urban density are predicted to increase in the coming years.

RBFRS delivers its services from 16 fire stations strategically located throughout the county. A separate headquarters in Reading houses the joint Thames Valley Fire Control Service providing fire control services to RBFRS, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Within RBFRS, Fleet and Equipment represents one of the major physical assets in service. Vehicles are the workplace of many of our staff and are integral to the delivery of frontline services to the community. Fire appliances are the outward facing image of the service, enabling the delivery of most of our critical services to the public. These are supported by a wider vehicle fleet that enable the business of the service to take place effectively and efficiently.

## 5.2 Financial factors driving change

There are many financial factors that impact the provision of fleet and equipment. The major ones are:

- Changes to Central Government funding provided to the service
- Public finances are under pressure with a continuing objective of delivering more efficient public services at a lower cost
- A changing risk profile requiring a more diverse fleet to meet the needs of operational response
- The rapid change in technology leading to vehicles and equipment reaching obsolescence sooner
- Changing legislation requiring the adaption of fleet and equipment or the provision of new designs.

## 5.3 External factors affecting fleet asset provision

**Third party collaborative and partnership agreements.** RBFRS already has agreements/formal partnerships in place with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) and our Thames Valley fire and rescue service partners in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The depth and range of these agreements, along with any others that emerge, is likely to increase over the next few years.

**Thames Valley FRS MOU.** The Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire) have agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work more collaboratively. This will increasingly shape future vehicle and equipment solutions and decisions, particularly where there are opportunities for:

- increased efficiency
- reduced costs
- resilience through the sharing of vehicles, equipment, systems, processes, knowledge, skills and teams

**Hampshire partnership joint working agreement (JWA).** for the sharing of fleet servicing is to be renewed by 01 April 2025 as it continues to provide a resilient and cost-effective way to maintain our front line operational fleet.

**Political.** Home Office oversight through HMICFRS and focused procurement reviews provides a useful opportunity to ensure we are

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balancing the need to achieve value for money with the provision of effective and robust operational appliances and assets. Central Government is seeking to reduce the barriers and encourage public bodies to share data and resources to increase knowledge, better prioritisation of service delivery and reduce service costs. Procurement and maintenance of vehicles and equipment are a potential area where efficiencies could be made, better value for money gained and operational alignment supported. With this in mind we are committed to the NFCC Fire Commercial Transformation Programme and its three key principles:

- **Standardised requirements.** developing agreed standard specifications that are operationally driven rather than procurement-led
- **Aggregated volumes.** FRS' that bring larger volumes to market typically get better deals. Where possible, i.e. non-fire specific goods and services, consider the wider purchasing power of other public sector organisations
- **Collaboratively managed contracts and suppliers.** Joined-up strategic engagement, supplier performance and contract management.

**Market place.** The market for new procurement is more volatile with increased uncertainty on costs as the global market changes and as different providers develop their own delivery strategy and products. We will operate in line with RBFRS procurement rules and maintain oversight of timescales for renewal to gain the best advantage against the prevailing market conditions.

#### 5.4 Environmental factors driving change

The environment in which RBFRS operates is ever changing, requiring more diverse resource provision to meet the effects of spate weather conditions, increased populations, and busier infrastructures. More stringent vehicle emission standards, clear air zones, whole life carbon footprint will affect not only the engine and its waste products but also the material from which the fleet asset is manufactured. RBFRS will encourage efficient use of resources to minimise impact on the environment. Functional reviews of vehicle and equipment replacement will always consider alternative solutions to reduce our carbon footprint. This may include multi or specialist-fuelled vehicles, LPG, Biodiesel, Electricity or Hydrogen. Lifetime costs and disposal costs and impacts will also be considered and evaluated when reviewing fleet vehicle options.

### 6. Fleet and equipment asset governance

The overarching framework that sets the course of our work across all property assets is the **Strategic Asset Investment Framework** (SAIF). Each year, the Fire Authority updates this document, which sets out the capital programme for the replacement and refurbishment of our fleet and equipment assets, as well as our ICT and property, over a 10-year term. The SAIF provides a greater narrative around property investment and the decision-making process and is supported by the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). It recognises the importance of our valuable

fleet and equipment assets and the need to invest in them, so they remain fit for purpose, sustainable and affordable.

The development of the SAIF provides the Fire Authority with a clear view of the long-term financial pressures on meeting the planned improvement, replacement and refurbishment programmes that are urgently needed to ensure assets continue to meet requirements now and into the future. This enables the Fire Authority to consider how best to address identified financial pressures so future service provision matches public expectations and addresses risk.

As well as the public experiencing the benefit of the Authority's continued investment in fleet and equipment assets, we see an added benefit of our staff being safeguarded and feeling valued through the provision of improved assets, with an added benefit of improving staff recruitment and retention. The performance in this important area is assessed using regular staff surveys with focussed questions on fleet and equipment.

The SAIF details how our assets will deliver on the key themes identified in the Corporate Plan and CRMP. This requires co-ordination with, and the co-operation of, the whole organisation to be successful, so there is a considerable amount of collaboration when developing requirements.

The RBFRS Assets function was reorganised in 2023 with a professionally qualified Head of Assets now leading a multi-disciplinary assets department with combined responsibility for an Assets service covering estates, fleet and equipment, along with sustainability and physical security. The Assets service is led by the Head of Assets, falling under the direction of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and reporting corporately to the SLT. The Fleet and Equipment team is led by a Group Manager and is split into a Fleet Section and Operational Equipment Section, with interoperability within the teams.

Various tasks and roles within the remit of each business area will be delegated to the most appropriate member of the Fleet and Equipment team. Development of core activities related to those tasks will be devised and actioned in consultation with the appropriate business leads. Priorities will be decided and agreed according to current/future business need, operational urgency, resource availability and budget provision.

### **Fleet and Equipment Management Group**

In line with seeking a more holistic, collaborative and informed approach, a Fleet and Equipment Management Group will be introduced by March 2025, chaired by the Head of Assets. The purpose of the group will be to foster a close working relationship between all fleet and equipment users, to oversee projects and to provide an essential opportunity for engagement and discussions on key fleet and equipment matters.

## 7. Sustainability and the environment

The delivery of fleet and equipment will reflect the wider **RBFRS Sustainability Strategy**. In particular compliance with legal requirements and government targets will be adhered to. The fleet will also be designed to promote health, safety and wellbeing goals of the organisation. It is clear that climate change needs to be combated. The impacts of climate are already changing the nature of the incidents the service respond to.

So far as reasonably practicable, the Fleet and Equipment Strategy will prioritise the procurement of low, and zero emissions vehicles and equipment. As a minimum, all future vehicles will be hybrid or plugin hybrid, with a move towards full alternative fuels across the entire new fleet in due course as technology allows. Battery technology is available now, but it is likely that other technologies will become available in the future. Continuous engagement with partners and suppliers will be central to ensuring a coherent pathway to net zero with our partners.

The provision of alternatively fuelled fire appliances is currently in its infancy, however, battery and hydrogen powered vehicles are in development and the outcome of these trials will guide future fleet developments.

To support the provision of alternative fleet an uplift in investment in supporting infrastructure will be required. In time this infrastructure will replace the current fuel infrastructure in-service.

## 8. Measuring output

### 8.1 Key performance indicators

- **Financial.** Cost savings achieved through efficient procurement and maintenance; baselined against previous years performance or other comparable Services data
- **Operational.** Fleet availability and reliability metrics (e.g., downtime, response times)
- **Environmental.** Reduction in carbon emissions and fuel consumption.
- **Stakeholder satisfaction.** Feedback from end-users and partners on fleet performance
- **Staff development.** Training and development initiatives undertaken by the Fleet and Equipment team.

## 9. Fleet and equipment goals and structure

### 9.1 Departmental goals

The Fleet and Equipment department is a core part of RBFRS enabling it to meet its strategic aims and objectives. The overarching goal of the Fleet and Equipment department is **to deliver the right asset, maintained to the highest standard, to**

**the right place at the right time.** The Fleet and Equipment team, therefore, makes a valuable contribution to the objectives of the organisation, by ensuring all the vehicles and equipment are managed and maintained to appropriate standards and are kept in an efficient and effective operational condition.

## 9.2 Departmental objectives

The key objectives for the Fleet and Equipment team are:

- To operate within a governance framework that enables input from all relevant stakeholders, in order to provide fleet assets that meet the needs of the organisation
- To protect and enhance the environment and maintain a high level of sustainability for all fleet assets
- To provide high quality, safe, fit for purpose fleet assets to meet the end users needs
- To maintain cost-effective and timely processes for the procurement, repair, maintenance, commissioning, decommissioning and disposal of fleet assets
- To collaborate with partners to maximise the effectiveness of fleet assets within an emergency response environment
- To enable a high level of fleet asset utilisation across the service
- Take advantage of new technology to support the organisations goals and increase productivity
- To make the Fleet and Equipment team a centre of excellence

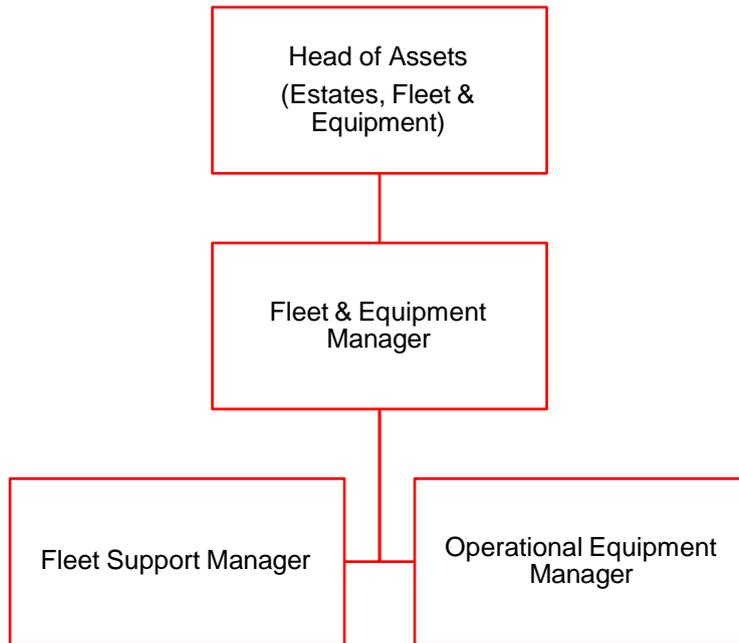
## 10. Organisational structure

### 10.1 Leadership

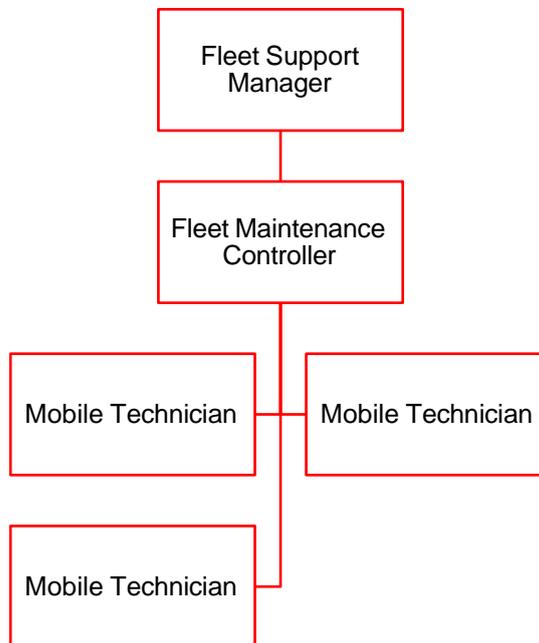
The team works collaboratively across two functional areas, the Fleet section and the Operational Equipment section, both working very closely with the Supplies section. The leadership team consists of the Head of Assets and a Group Manager Fleet & Equipment, supported by a Fleet Support Manager (new role from autumn 2024) and an Operational Equipment Manager.

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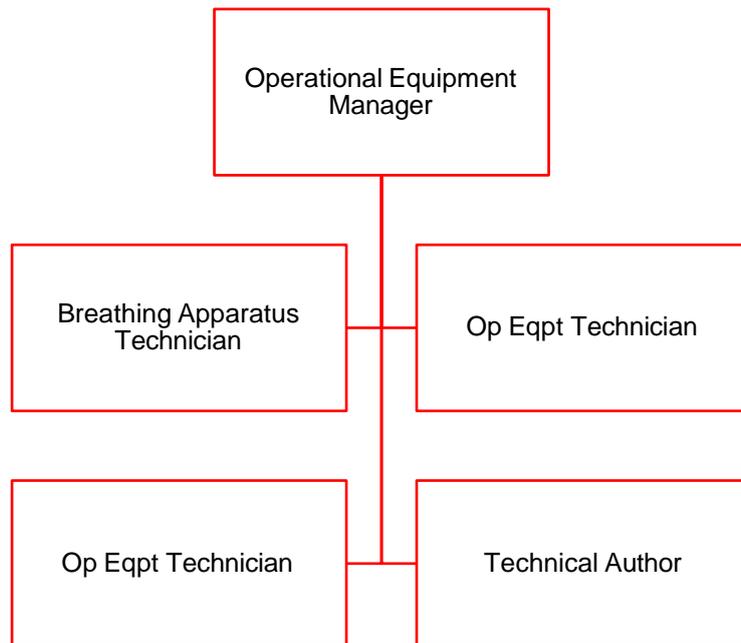
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### 10.1 Fleet



10.1 Operational Equipment



**11. Equality, diversity and inclusion**

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion for all our employees and the wider community. Every fleet asset is used by every member of the organisation and needs to reflect their unique and individual needs. Equality, diversity and inclusion has been and will continue to be, a core part of the development of every technical specification produced by the Fleet and Equipment Team. By listening closely to end users and the widest possible range of representative bodies, the team will maximise the opportunities to bring in the assets that are suitable for use by the widest range of people possible.

**12. Collaboration and partnerships**

We can provide more efficient and effective Fleet Services through greater collaboration with our partners and stakeholders. Currently we collaborate with the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services to provide aligned operational fleet and equipment. Common Breathing Apparatus equipment enabling the removal of cross boarder mobilisations solely to support breathing apparatus operations. Joint procurement for hydraulic rescue equipment, thermal imaging cameras, power tools, firefighting foam and more resulting in financial savings and the sharing of key technical and procurement knowledge and skills to enhance the regions reputation in the marketplace.

The fleet maintenance Joint Working Agreement (JWA) with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is a collaborative partnership that has been running for 10 years, resulting in financial savings and the provision of other benefits for both parties whilst maintaining a high level of quality across fleet maintenance.

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Opportunities to collaborate further will always be explored and are not limited to the Fire and Rescue Sector. As alternative fuels start to become more common collaboration with other public sector and blue light organisations will be likely to speed up access to new infrastructure.

### **13. Management of the strategy**

The majority of this strategy will be delivered through business-as-usual processes and activity – details can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

### **14. Evaluation and review**

The efficacy of this strategy will be evaluated annually by a formal review process.

## APPENDIX 1 – IMPLEMENTATION

### A1.1 General

The majority of this strategy will be delivered through business-as-usual processes and activity. For new developments, specific projects may be implemented to ensure the correct governance and resourcing is put in place to achieve the requirement.

### A1.2 Financial planning

Planning for fleet and equipment replacement will be undertaken in line with service needs and identified priorities. The CRMP process will inform the likely future fleet asset need with detailed planning delivered by end user representative groups. Replacement of all support vehicles and major equipment in accordance with an agreed and planned lifecycle will be detailed in a predetermined renewals programme aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and will inform the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF).

### A1.3 Fuel

Fuel represents one of the largest ongoing costs to the service fleet both financially and environmentally. Options to reduce fuel usage and to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels will be explored at every opportunity. Fuel is a geopolitically sensitive resource subject to price variation caused by global events. It is also a critical enabler to RBFRS when providing its statutory duty.

As part of the move towards Net Zero RBFRS will embrace technologies to reduce carbon emissions at the tailpipe to zero. Hybrid vehicle technology is the minimum requirement for all new light vehicles in the fleet with full electric specified where practical. Charging infrastructure will be provided to support these moves. Alternative fuels such as Hydrogen, biodiesel and LPG will be used in fleet applications where practical to assist in the reduction of carbon production.

Where fossil fuels are used to power fleet and equipment, diesel will be preferentially specified. The heavy fleet runs on diesel and by standardising on this fuel, an operational fuel reserve can be maintained. Bulk fuel (petrol and diesel) will be maintained at a level where there is a 12-week reserve available to counter supply disruption.

Service bulk diesel fuel supplies shall be used in preference to commercial forecourts whenever practicable. Where fuel must necessarily be purchased elsewhere, such purchases should be made using the fleet fuel card issued to each vehicle. Fuel should not be obtained from high-cost outlets such as motorway service stations unless there is no alternative. Use of the fuel card ensures that fuel is procured within a contract.

As the service moves towards an alternative fuel strategy the way fuel is held in reserve will change. For example, the use of back-up electrical supplies to enable charging of service vehicles will be considered and the amount of bulk diesel and petrol fuel held in service will change accordingly.

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#### A1.4 Procurement

Procurement of fleet assets is undertaken in line with the financial regulations of the service and applicable regulations and statutory instruments governing public contracts. Procurement exercises in each case will be in accordance with the goal to collaborate with partners to gain the best value for money possible. National, regional, or collaborative frameworks will be used where available. Where frameworks are not available tendering will mirror best practice as detail by the service procurement team. A procurement will only be undertaken once the end user need is defined and the financial and corporate needs have been defined and agreed.

#### A1.5 Standards

All fleet assets are purchased to meet a defined end user requirement specification and conform to an appropriate EN or BS or equivalent standard applicable to the type of vehicle or equipment to be procured. For example, pumping appliances are designed and built to BS EN 1846 - 2 & 3 and conform to The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and all other applicable Road Traffic legislation.

Published standards are the minimum level of requirement expected. Final technical specification for a procurement will exceed these requirements in some areas in order to meet the end user needs. An assessment of compliance to the applicable standards will form part of the tender evaluation and any user demonstration trails prior to the procurement exercise.

#### A1.6 Warranties

Equipment and vehicle defects during the early life of a vehicle are expected due to the bespoke nature of many of the products required for Fire Service use. To make the whole life costs of assets as manageable as possible, procurement will look to obtain the most advantageous warranty terms possible, balanced against the increased cost extended warranties can hold.

Where possible 5-year warranty terms will be aimed for, however, the requested periods will be specific to each product class and industry norms for that product.

#### A1.7 Decommissioning and disposal

Disposal and decommissioning of vehicles is carried out in line with service financial regulations to realise maximum capital receipts or by means of donation to a registered humanitarian charity or sector body. The disposal will be to a reputable organisation or individual.

The threat of “Trojan use” of assets for terrorist or illegal purposes is recognised and forms part of the disposal process. Disposal will follow a secure sale methodology, by selecting appropriate disposal routes which have been vetted. Vehicles will be decommissioned in a way that matches the disposal route chosen for the asset. As a minimum all communication equipment and service markings will be removed. Emergency warning equipment and markings will be removed prior to disposal, unless the vehicle is going for specialist disposal by an approved supplier who will assure the vehicle is going for use by another emergency service provider.

The environmental and sustainability policy of the organisation will guide disposal of fleet and equipment that is unable to be reused.

Asset sale will be recorded within the fleet management system and notification will be given to the Finance team for amendment of the asset registered in terms of capital assets.

#### **A1.8 Planned servicing and maintenance of fleet assets**

The majority of maintenance work is carried out by the service or service partner staff. Assets will be maintained at the most appropriate location for the work to be carried out safely and efficiently while minimising the time the asset is unavailable for operational use. Local garages are used to undertake some maintenance work to free up specialist staffs time to focus on more complex or technically specific work. For specialised services, such as body repairs and electrical work, these are outsourced to approved providers.

As a minimum, all front-line appliances and specials bearing emergency warning systems over 3,500 kilograms gross vehicle weight (GVW) shall be inspected for roadworthiness at 13-week intervals up to a maximum of 18 weeks, as specified in the Best Practice for the Maintenance of Fire Service Vehicles Document issued by National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

All general-purpose cars and vans shall be inspected on an annual basis, in line with manufacturers' recommendations of time and mileage covered. Servicing, maintenance and repair of vehicles shall be carried out in compliance with the requirements and standards of the following documents:

- NFCC Best Practice Manual
- HGV Testers Manual issued by The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
- Manufacturers' Guidance and Warranty terms

Each asset type is allocated an appropriate service plan, inspection schedule and statutory inspection and examination scheme dependent on the nature of the asset and how it is used.

This schedule is set up within the Fleet Management system and is such that the closure of one job card of a specific job type will automatically schedule the next due inspection or service according to pre-set plans. Detailed records of each critical fleet asset history will be retained and managed in line with legal requirements. The goal is to have all records generated and stored electronically, however, hard copies of some records will be required.

#### **A1.9 Unscheduled repairs and defects**

The fleet team will aim to reduce down-time of critical assets due to defects by continued delivery of 24/7 response service to end users. The majority of out of hours support will be provided by service staff, however, partnership arrangements with other service providers may be utilised. Defect records will be retained to show clearance rates and trends so that preventative action can be identified and taken to further improve overall reliability.

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Vehicle collisions and other damaged caused to assets will be attended under defect procedures in the first instance for response, safety reasons and the determination of the cause, work will be progressed through the accident repair process or routine job process. An investigation into the circumstances will be undertaken by a member of service staff to identify underlying causes. This learning will be used to improve the operation of fleet assets.

In the case of vehicles, timely collision repairs are arranged in liaison with insurance and repairers with the claim being processed through the fleet team. The repairs will be provided either in house or at approved repairs and job progress will be monitored through our normal processes. Accident reporting that highlights trends by station and operator will be monitored and effective actions to reduce vehicle accidents will be implemented where appropriate, Service wide performance figures on vehicle accidents will be considered through the Health and Safety team.

#### A1.10 Reserve vehicles

Reserve vehicles are required to maintain the operational availability of the fleet. Vehicles will need to be replaced for planned and unplanned maintenance and the vehicle that is brought in as a reserve needs to meet the operational demands of the organisation. As a minimum, reserve vehicles will be able to safely stow a core set of operational equipment and will not require any additional training for the users or drivers.

More specialist vehicles, such as high reach vehicles, are more challenging to provide reserve vehicles for. Careful coordination with our partners, particularly across the Thames Valley, will ensure that the planned maintenance of these type of vehicles minimises the impact on operational response.

The use of more common vehicle designs across multiple special vehicle types will increase the interchangeability of these vehicles and enable the provision of some reserve capability.

#### A1.11 Vehicle records

Vehicle records, such as logbooks, are currently a mixture of paper and electronic records. Some records are held centrally; however, logbooks are held with the vehicle making auditing difficult.

The prevalence of mobile technology is an enabler to make all vehicle records electronic and reduce the amount of time spent on paperwork by staff. It should also make the data collected about vehicles accessible in near real time, reducing the time taken to check a vehicles status before use.

#### A1.12 Alternative forms of service provision

The servicing and maintenance of fleet assets is predominantly undertaken by service and partner service staff in their own facilities. The vertical integration this provides allows for rapid re-prioritisation of work when required as well as having the right skills to maintain the sector specific specialist equipment, immediately available. External garages may be used for light vehicle and chassis warranty work in addition to contingency repairs. Vehicle body shop repair facilities at approved outlets are used for collision repair and the work checked by the feet team for compliance.

Warranty repairs are undertaken in conjunction with the original manufacturers at locations approved by them.

Where specialist repairs or certification is required the fleet team will aim to have this undertaken by the vehicle or equipment manufacturers or organisations which are compliant with appropriate standards.

#### A1.13 Benchmarking and analysis

To ensure the effectiveness of our strategy, we will conduct regular benchmarking and performance analysis. This will involve comparing our performance against other fire and rescue services, industry best practices, and national standards. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be established to track progress and identify areas for improvement. These KPIs may include:

- **Maintenance times.** We will benchmark our maintenance time for fleet and equipment and response times to defects and breakdowns against service risk targets and compare our performance to similar fire and rescue services. This will help us identify areas where we can improve our response capabilities.
- **Vehicle availability and reliability.** We will track the availability and reliability of our fleet to ensure we have sufficient resources to respond to incidents effectively. Benchmarking against industry standards will help us identify opportunities to improve maintenance practices and optimise vehicle lifecycles.
- **Equipment effectiveness.** We will evaluate the effectiveness of our equipment in real-world scenarios and compare it to industry best practices. This will inform our procurement decisions and ensure that our firefighters have access to the most appropriate and up-to-date tools.
- **Cost-effectiveness.** We will analyse the cost-effectiveness of our fleet and equipment strategy, considering factors such as procurement, maintenance, and operational expenses. Benchmarking against other fire and rescue services will help us identify opportunities to improve efficiency and achieve cost savings.

#### A1.14 Management information systems and quality records

A robust Management Information System (MIS) will be central to the successful implementation of this strategy. The MIS will capture, store, and analyse data related to fleet and equipment performance, maintenance, and usage. This will enable us to monitor progress against KPIs, identify trends, and inform evidence-based decision-making.

The system will be designed to capture all necessary information to comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including those relating to vehicle and equipment maintenance, inspections, and safety checks. The system should generate automated reports to facilitate compliance and streamline audit processes.

The data collected through the MIS will be used to develop evidence-led responses to a range of challenges, such as:

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### Appendix A

- **Identifying areas for improvement in fleet and equipment performance.** By analysing data on maintenance times, vehicle availability, and equipment effectiveness, we can pinpoint areas where improvements are needed and develop targeted interventions.
- **Optimising maintenance schedules and practices.** The system will track maintenance activities and identify patterns that can inform more efficient and cost-effective maintenance schedules.
- **Informing procurement decisions.** Data on equipment usage, performance, and lifecycle costs will be used to make informed procurement decisions, ensuring that we invest in the most suitable and cost-effective solutions.
- **Evaluating the impact of new technologies and innovations.** By tracking the performance of new technologies and innovations, we will assess their effectiveness and make informed decisions about their wider adoption.

By harnessing the power of data and information, we will ensure that our strategy is evidence-led, efficient, and responsive to the evolving needs of our service and community.

#### A1.15 Staff development and succession planning

The People Strategy recognises that a skilled and engaged workforce is crucial to maintaining the operational readiness of the service and we will apply this to our fleet and equipment team. We will prioritise staff development and succession planning, in order to ensure the resilience and sustainability of the team, develop ourselves to meet future challenges and deliver excellent levels of service. Key to this will be:

- **Empowerment and growth.** We will foster a culture of continuous learning and development, providing opportunities for our team to enhance their skills and knowledge. This will include technical training on new equipment and technologies, as well as leadership development to prepare individuals for future roles within the team.
- **Talent management and progression.** We will implement robust talent management processes to identify and nurture high-potential individuals within the maintenance team. Clear career pathways and succession plans will be established to ensure a smooth transition of skills and responsibilities, preventing any gaps in maintenance capabilities.
- **Attraction and retention.** We will create an environment where skilled maintenance professionals thrive. This includes offering competitive benefits, fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture, and recognising the valuable contributions of our team members.

#### A1.16 Legislative requirements

When planning for fleet asset provision, the following legislative requirements will be met:

- The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 2017
- The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
- The Road Traffic Act 1991. The Road Assets (Registration & Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2006.
- The Control of Pollution (oil storage) (England) Regulations 2001.
- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- The European Procurement Regulations.
- The NFCC best practice manual Guidelines for Fleet Maintenance.
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

The list of acts and regulations is not exhaustive. By its very nature fleet and equipment will be subject to a vast range of legislation, regulation and guidance. To adhere to vehicle operating legislation the fleet service employs a variety of procedures to ensure that the vehicle fleet complies with regulations.

The following are some of the current procedures adopted to satisfy the legal requirements and provide a good practice methodology:

- Safety inspection programmes
- Vehicle and equipment testing programs
- Defect reporting system
- Preventative maintenance schedules
- Vehicle Inventories and risk assessments
- Vehicle repair / maintenance history quality records

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### Appendix A

## APPENDIX 2 - FLEET LIST

### A2.1 General

The RBFRS Fleet List is provided for reference, but it is dynamic and the most up to date version is available via the RBFRS website or on request from the Fleet & Equipment Manager or Fleet Support Manager. The list below is as at August 2024.

TYPE	FLEET NO	REGISTRATION	Type
<b>01 Caversham Road (reading 01)</b>			
WRL	A116	KY71 ELO	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
WRU	S32	RX59 EZW	Merc Sprinter 515 4x4
C/GPV	V93	RJ61 LZA	Fiat Ducato crew van
PICKUP	V132	EO21 GPE	Ford Ranger
BOAT	S23	BOAT	Fire Alpha 111 work rescue boat
BOAT	S42	BOAT	Inflatable work rescue boat
BT	T13	TRAILER	Boat trailer
BT	T5	TRAILER	Boat trailer
TRA	T8	TRAILER	Horse box trailer
<b>02 Wokingham Road (Reading 02)</b>			
WRL	A112	KM70 ZBF	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
C/GPV	V117	KW18 LNR	Vauxhall combo crew
<b>04 Newbury</b>			
WRL	A105	KN18 NFZ	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
WRL	A106	KN18 NGE	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
C/GPV	V95	RJ61 LZC	Fiat Ducato
<b>05 Hungerford</b>			
WR4	A91	RX12 KGF	Mercedes Atego 1529 4x4/JDC
PICKUP	V127	EO70 GOJ	Ford Ranger
<b>06 Lambourn</b>			
WR4	A87	RX61 CVB	Mercedes Atego 1529 4x4/JDC
PICKUP	V128	EO21 GOK	Ford Ranger
<b>10 Wokingham</b>			
WRL	A108	KL19 TUA	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
C/GPV	V115	KW18 LNO	Vauxhall combo crew
<b>11 Mortimer</b>			
WR4	A88	RX61 CVA	Mercedes Atego 1529 4x4/JDC
PICKUP	V129	EO21 GOP	Ford Ranger

TYPE	FLEET NO	REGISTRATION	Type
<b>14 Ascot</b>			
WRL	A114	KN21 WOU	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
<b>15 Crowthorne</b>			
WRL	A104	KN18 NFY	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
PICKUP	V130	EO21 GOU	Ford Ranger
<b>16 Bracknell</b>			
WRL	A113	KN21 WOR	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
WRC	S35	WX64 HAE	Mercedes Zetros/Emergency One
PM	PM009	WX54 VLU	MAN (Hook-lift)
PM	PM201	WX54 VUP	MAN (Hook-lift)
C/GPV	V91	LG11 EUZ	Fiat Ducato (HVP support)
C/GPV	V94	RJ61 LZB	Fiat Ducato
<b>17 Slough</b>			
WRL	A117	KY71 ELU	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
WRL	A115	KY71 ELJ	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
GPV	V124	EG18 ZWP	Ford Transit Custom (L&D)
C/GPV	V116	KW18 LNP	Vauxhall combo crew
TRA	T14	TRAILER	RIB trailer
<b>18 Langley</b>			
WRL	A111	KM70 ZBE	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
C/GPV	V118	KW18 LNT	Vauxhall combo crew
<b>19 Maidenhead</b>			
WRL	A118	KY71 ELV	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
WR4	A90	RX12 KGG	Mercedes Atego 1529 4x4/JDC
MRV	S28	RX56 TNZ	Merc Sprinter 515
L4P	V119	Y536 ROR	Land Rover Defender
L4P	S43	SP71XLJ	Iveco Daily 4x4
ICU	S29	RX57 NNW	Mercedes Atego
PICKUP	V131	EO21 GOX	Ford Ranger
C/GPV	V92	RV61 VWA	Fiat Ducato
<b>20 Whitley Wood (Reading 20)</b>			
WRL	A109	KR69 ORO	Volvo fll 260/emergency one
ALP	S39	KU70 YOY	Volvo fm370/emergency one
EPU	S44	DA73 CWZ	MAN TGE 5.160
OSU	S25	RX04 SMU	Mercedes Econic
PM	PM027	WX54 VMT	MAN (Hook-lift)

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TYPE	FLEET NO	REGISTRATION	Type
C/GPV	V137	FM23 NRV	Combo crew van diesel
FLT	S26	RX54 LBA	Kooi AAP forklift
FLT	S36	FORK LIFT	Stihl RX 70 2.5
<b>21 Windsor</b>			
WRL	A107	KL19 TUH	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
<b>22 Theale</b>			
WRL	A110	KR69 ORP	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
RSV	S31	RX59 EZZ	Mercedes Econic
C/GPV	V136	FG23 XZS	Combo crew van electric
<b>RBFRS HQ (Pool)</b>			
L4C	W85	HX17 LNG	Kia Sportage SUV
L4C	W86	HX17 LNH	Kia Sportage SUV
L4C	W87	HX17 LNJ	Kia Sportage SUV
L4C	W88	LJ18 FYB	Kia Sportage SUV
L4C	W66	RX12 JTV	Land Rover Freelander SUV
L4C	W67	RX12 JTY	Land Rover Freelander SUV
L4C	W68	RX12 JTZ	Land Rover Freelander SUV
CAR	W94	FD72 MBF	Vauxhall Corsa - e
CAR	W96	FD72 MBV	Vauxhall Corsa - e
CAR	W95	FD72 MBO	Vauxhall Corsa - e
ECAR	W90	HJ72 LFO	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
ECAR	W91	HJ72 LFP	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
ECAR	W92	HJ72 LFR	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
ECAR	W93	HJ72 LFT	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
ECAR	W98	HJ23 KLL	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
ECAR	W97	HJ23 KYH	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
ECAR	W99	HG23 MHY	Toyota Rav4 hybrid
L4C	W100	RX24 WYG	SKODA KODIAQ
L4C	W101	RX24 WYP	SKODA KODIAQ
L4C	W102	RX24 WYO	SKODA KODIAQ
<b>Central Hub</b>			
GPV	V121	HX18 EGU	Renault Trafic
GPV	V110	LJ16 JYO	Renault Trafic
<b>Western Hub</b>			
GPV	V122	HX18 EGV	Renault Trafic
GPV	V108	LJ16 JYL	Renault Trafic
<b>Eastern Hub</b>			
GPV	V123	HX18 EGY	Renault Trafic
GPV	V109	LJ16 JYN	Renault Trafic
<b>Driver Training</b>			
WRL	A103	KX17 MXO	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One

TYPE	FLEET NO	REGISTRATION	Type
WRL	A86	RX59 FAO	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC
L4C	V87	S71 EAP	Land Rover 110 County
L4C	LC028	RV69 GMO	Toyota Rav4 PHEV SUV (lease)
<b>Fire cadets</b>			
WRL	A74	RX06 ERJ	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC
WRL	A75	RX06 ERK	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC
WRL	A76	RX06 ERO	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC
WRL	A84	RX59 FAK	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC
<b>Headquarters</b>			
GPV	V103	LG13 KOX	Fiat Ducato (Facilities)
TRA	T9	TRAILER	Trailer - (Back-up generator)
C/GPV	V84	RE08 VWW	Fiat Ducato (Stores)
<b>Community safety</b>			
C/GPV	V139	FG73 EXS	Combo crew van elec
<b>Hydrants team</b>			
GPV	V111	LJ16 JYP	Renault Trafic
GPV	V112	LJ16 JYR	Renault Trafic
<b>It and communications</b>			
C/GPV	V138	FG73 EXR	Combo crew van elec
GPV	V98	LF13 HHK	Fiat Ducato
<b>Training centre</b>			
WRL	A100	KX17 MXK	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One
WRL	A80	RX59 FBA	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC
<b>Transport</b>			
C/GPV	V135	HX22 GJZ	Fiat Scudo
GPV	V107	FJ16 BZM	Fiat Ducato (Vehicle Tech) (lease)
GPV	V113	KV67 FXX	Vauxhall Vivaro (Equipment Tech)
GPV	V104	LF13 HHX	Fiat Ducato (Equipment Tech)
GPV	V140	HN24EWR	Fiat Ducato
GPV	V114	KV67 FXY	Vauxhall Vivaro (Op Equipment Assistant)
GPV	V133	HX71 GNO	Fiat Ducato
GPV	V134	HX71 GNP	Fiat Ducato
REC	S33	WP63 NRN	Mercedes Atego recovery
<b>Reserves</b>			
WRL	A83	RX59 FAJ	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC (West Hub Stn 04)
WRL	A102	KX17 MXG	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One (West Hub Stn 18)

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### Appendix A

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>FLEET NO</b>	<b>REGISTRATION</b>	<b>Type</b>
WRL	A82	RX59 FAF	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC (West Hub Stn 11)
WRL	A81	RX59 FAA	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC (Stn 22 Ops 1)
WRL	A85	RX59 FAM	Mercedes Atego 1328/JDC (Stn 22 Ops 2)
WRL	A101	KX17 MXL	Volvo FLL 260/Emergency One (Central Hub Stn 10)

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 1</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE AND ACTION</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 To inform members of the revenue and capital outturns as well as treasury position at the end of quarter 1 2024/25.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

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

**3. REPORT**

**Commentary on Revenue Outturn**

3.1 The detailed revenue outturn for quarter 1, 2024/25 is shown in **Appendix A**. Net costs of TVFCS for quarter 1 are shown in **Appendix B**.

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

3.3 The forecast revenue outturn for 2024/25 is shown in **Appendix A** and shows an anticipated surplus of £80,000 compared to the original budget. Variances against individual revenue lines are explained below.

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- 3.4 Employee costs. The Grey book pay award from 1 July 2024 has been agreed at 4%. This compares to a budget assumption of 3.75%, resulting in an additional pressure of £39,000. The Stations budget was set to include a buffer of an additional ten firefighters with the actual numbers of staff on wholetime stations below the budgeted number in quarter 1. The 17 new recruits that joined in February are now all on stations and 18 new recruits have been taken on (in July) and after training will join their stations in November. The proportion of firefighters in development is higher than in the budget. There is a forecast cost saving due to vacancies of around £369,000 on wholetime stations.

The overtime budget was set at a lower level, in anticipation that the additional ten firefighter buffer would help lead to reduced overtime. Due to the under establishment in quarter 1 and pressure on the overtime budget to cover sickness, firefighters on light duties and additional overtime for training, the overtime forecast is showing at £395,000 over budget for the year.

On-call stations are currently showing a net negative variance across the county, with a net variance of £93,000, with Lambourn being £50,000 of this amount.

- 3.5 The Green book pay award has not yet been finalised. A forecast pay award of 3.75% (from 1 April 2024) has been used, which is the same as budgeted.
- 3.6 *Occupational Health* – costs are forecast to be £46,000 higher than budget due to cost increases, additional number of wholetime staff with additional medicals, increased numbers of referrals – particularly of complex cases needing physician rather than adviser appointments. Referrals for mental health cases have also risen.
- 3.7 *Contracts* – Internal and External audit cost are forecast to be a total of £22,000 higher than budgeted.
- 3.8 *Pension costs* – £27,000 higher due to additional Injury award costs.
- 3.9 *Grants* – the Pension Grant to cover additional pension costs has come in £87,000 higher than budgeted.
- 3.10 *Interest receivable* — the continuing high interest rates have been to the advantage of the Authority, with current and anticipated interest from money on deposit forecast to yield around £146,000 more revenue than originally budgeted.

### **Capital**

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

## **Treasury**

- 3.12 Treasury management activity for quarter 1 is shown in **Appendix D**. All treasury management operations have been conducted in full compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices.

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

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

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The forecast outturn position on the Revenue Account is expected to be a surplus of £80,000.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

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

## **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9. 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.

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### 11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

### 12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A – Revenue position at quarter 1 2024/25

12.2 Appendix B – Net costs of TVFCS quarter 1 2024/25

12.3 Appendix C – Capital position at quarter 1 2024/25

12.4 Appendix D – Treasury position at quarter 1 2024/25

### 13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Mark Hawkins  
Finance Manager  
[hawkinsm@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:hawkinsm@rbfrs.co.uk)

13.2 Conor Byrne  
Head of Finance and Procurement  
[byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk)

	Annual Budget £'000	Q1 Outturn £'000	Forecast to YE £'000	Fcast - Budget Variance £'000
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>				
STATIONS	20,743	5,008	20,715	(28)
NON-STATIONS	14,499	3,428	14,518	19
TRAINING	702	116	713	11
OTHER	294	80	292	(2)
	<b>36,238</b>	<b>8,632</b>	<b>36,238</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PREMISES</b>				
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	950	171	949	(1)
RATES	968	283	968	0
CLEANING	294	49	294	0
UTILITIES	787	109	787	0
	<b>2,999</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>2,998</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>SUPPLIES</b>				
INSURANCE	437	254	437	0
EQUIPMENT	510	93	525	15
IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES	929	386	946	17
CLOTHING/PPE	373	39	373	0
COMMUNICATIONS	913	165	912	(1)
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	268	105	314	46
PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS	142	101	143	1
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES	110	24	110	0
SUPPLIES OTHER	231	67	249	18
	<b>3,913</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>4,009</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>CONTRACTS</b>				
CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS	1,063	253	1,045	(18)
LEGAL	50	4	50	0
OTHER CONTRACTS (incl. Professional Services)	961	185	995	34
	<b>2,074</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>2,090</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>				
VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS	754	220	761	7
TRAVEL	228	55	224	(4)
	<b>982</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PENSIONS</b>				
PENSIONS	518	163	545	27
	<b>518</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
GRANTS	(1,593)	(1,368)	(1,680)	(87)
RENTAL INCOME	(239)	(128)	(223)	16
TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME	(429)	(107)	(429)	0
INCOME OTHER	(546)	(7)	(548)	(2)
	<b>(2,807)</b>	<b>(1,610)</b>	<b>(2,880)</b>	<b>(73)</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>43,917</b>	<b>9,748</b>	<b>43,985</b>	<b>68</b>
DEBT CHARGES INTEREST	333	0	333	0
INVESTMENT INTEREST	(453)	(137)	(599)	(146)
REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL	2,001	0	2,001	0
APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES	(384)	0	(384)	0
FINANCING COSTS	550	0	550	0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>45,964</b>	<b>9,611</b>	<b>45,886</b>	<b>(78)</b>
GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS	(45,964)	(14,450)	(45,966)	(2)
<b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT BEFORE USE OF RESERVES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,839)</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>(80)</b>

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Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
 Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

	Annual Budget £'000	Outturn to June 24 £'000	Forecast to Y/E £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
EMPLOYEES	2,108	519	2,062	(46)
CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFRS	429	107	429	0
SUPPLIES/ OTHER	50	2	50	0
TECHNOLOGY	287	57	283	(4)
<b>NET COST OF TVFCS</b>	<b>2,874</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>2,824</b>	<b>(50)</b>
RBFRS Share of Costs (37%)	1,063	253	1,045	(18)

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Project Owner	Active Capital Projects	Total Project Budget £000's A	Spend in Prior Years £000's B	Spend in 2024/25 £000's C	Estimated Project Spend to Completion £000's D	Anticipated spend in 2024/25 £000's E	Total Estimated Project Spend £000's B+C+D	Overall variance on Project	Estimated Project Completion Date	Commentary
Estates Development Programme	Training Centre	3,860	349	67	3,444	3,181	3,860	0	Q1 25/26	The main contract has been awarded to premier Modular Limited and the factory was visited on August 5th to check all is on track. Stage 2 of the contract commenced with ground breaking on 26 July 2024 and demolition work on 5th August 2024.
	Slough refurbishment	780	415	268	97	368	780	0	Q2 24/25	The refurbishment at Slough was completed in August 2024, including additional works to the original contract to accommodate decontamination, EDI and LED lighting, Final invoicing is awaited.
	Water Rescue - Slough	122	3	2	117	118	122	0	Q2 24/25	The modifications to the Slough Fire Station to accommodated the Water Rescue facility were completed. Awaiting final invoices.
	LED Lighting	225	0	0	225	225	225	0	Q3 24/25	The contract has been awarded to Laser, with the project to commence in Q3.
	Sustainability - Heat Decarbonisation	1,665	0	0	1,665	462	1,665	0	Q4 24/25	Salix Funding is £928K. A change request has been submitted to Salix to change the Heat Decarbonisation system. This is anticipated to incur additional costs and will result in a delay to the project.
	Minor Capital Works	171	0	0	171	171	171	0	Q4 24/25	This includes EDI and LED lighting at Windsor, EDI and contaminants upgrades at Wokingham and fire alarm upgrades at Lambourn and Mortimer
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>5,719</b>	<b>4,525</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>0</b>		
Fleet & equipment	White Fleet (including EV vehicle)	711	533	30	148	178	711	0	Q2 24/25	At the end of Q1-24/25, Fiat Ducato has been delivered and paid for. The 3 x Skoda Kodiaq's were delivered in July and the Ford Ranger was delivered in August.
	6 Light Vans	220	0	0	220	220	220	0	Q4 24/25	6 additional light vehicles have been approved for purchase in 2024/25. Orders are not yet placed - specification work is ongoing
	Appliances	2,664	0	7	2,664	999	2,671	7	Q1 26/27	The first 3 of 8 Appliances are currently being built and ancillary equipment will also be purchased for the trucks. First 3 are in build with project delivery of February 2025
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>3,595</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>3,602</b>	<b>7</b>		
ICT	Network Refresh (WAN)	394	0	0	368	368	368	-26	Q4 24/25	In the final stages of agreeing and signing a new contract, which may change the contract cost. Start date for project is anticipated as end of Q3. The project includes upfront fees for installation and costs for 10 yrs licensing and support.
	Network Refresh (WAN) - 10 year licences	519	0	0	519	519	519	0		
	Software - Firewatch Development	50	12	0	38	38	50	0	Q4 24/25	Ongoing
	Fireground Radio Replacement	136	0	0	136	136	136	0	Q3 24/25	Q3 - October start rollout. All kit delivered.
	Station End Refresh	67	0	66	2	67	68	1	Q3 24/25	Delayed start date until October due to workloads

Project Owner	Active Capital Projects	Total Project Budget £000's	Spend in Prior Years £000's	Spend in 2024/25 £000's	Estimated Project Spend to Completion £000's	Anticipated spend in 2024/25 £000's	Total Estimated Project Spend £000's	Overall variance on Project	Estimated Project Completion Date	Commentary
	Hardware - Laptops	107	0	107	0	107	107	0	Q1 24/25	Completed.
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>1,063</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>1,248</b>	<b>-25</b>		
TVFCS	DS3000 technical refresh (ICCS)	222	0	0	222	222	222	0		Work commenced 23 Sept, due to complete 31 November.
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>11,913</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>10,036</b>	<b>7,379</b>	<b>11,895</b>	<b>-18</b>		

Agenda Item 10  
 Appendix C

# Treasury Management Update – Q1 2024/25

## Background

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

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

## Borrowing

The Authority's debt position was unchanged in Q1 2024/25, total debt remaining at £8,922k.

	<b>2024/25 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 June 2024 (£000's)</b>
Debt	8,922	8,922

## Investment Portfolio

The Authority held investments totalling £14.32m as at 30 June 2024.

At the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 and 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, MPC voted to maintain Bank Rate at 5.25%.

The two fixed term deposits totalling £4m invested on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 matured on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. A sum of £7m was invested on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June spread across three counterparties with good rates in line with our investment strategy, for the duration of six months each based on cash flow needs. A sum of £7.32m is held in a call Account with a UK bank at 30 June 2024.

## Agenda Item 10

### Appendix D

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

The budget for interest earnings for 2024/24 is £455,000. Due to the Bank Rate remaining steady, the actual interest earned as at the 30 June 2024 was £137,431 with the investments placed, as outlined above.

## Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the Authority to determine and keep under review its affordable borrowing limits. During the quarter ended 30 June 2024, the Authority has complied with the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25. The Head of Finance and Procurement reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators. All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices.

<b>Treasury Indicators</b>	<b>2024/25 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>30 June 2024 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2024/25 (£000's)</b>
Authorised Limit for external debt	16,535	16,535	16,535
Operational boundary for external debt	14,535	14,535	14,535
Gross external debt	8,922	8,922	8,922

<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing</b>	<b>30 June 2024 Actual (£000's)</b>
Under 12 months	394
12 months to 24 months	0
24 Months to 5 Years	597
5 Years to 10 years	3,581
10 Years to 20 Years	1,350
20 Years to 30 Years	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,922</b>

<b>Prudential Indicators</b>	<b>2024/25 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>30 June 2024 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2024/25 (£000's)</b>
Capital expenditure	9,003	478	7,167
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	9,535	9,535	9,200
Annual change in CFR	(550)	(550)	(550)
In-year borrowing requirement	0	0	0
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	1.71%	1.71%	1.71%

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## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>08 OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>QUARTER ONE APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY TO MEET CORPORATE MEASURES 14 AND 15</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Whole-time availability across the quarter was 97.7% against a target of 97.4%. This is a 0.1 percentage point decrease in comparison to Q4 of last financial year.

On-call appliance availability through the quarter was 34.1% against a target of 50%. This represents a 7.4 percentage point decrease in comparison to Q4.

Against a corporate measure target of 75% of emergency incidents attended in 10 minutes, the Service achieved 74.7%. See supporting narrative.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Management Committee:

- 2.1 **Note** the 2024/25 quarter one performance of **97.7%** appliance availability of the Service's 14 whole-time appliances in line with Corporate Measure 14<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 **Note** the 2024/25 quarter one overall on-call appliance availability performance of **34.1%**, in line with Corporate Measure 15<sup>2</sup>.

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

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

**3. REPORT**

**Response Standard:**

3.1 The Response Standard during this period was slightly below the target of 75%, at 74.7% of all incidents reached within 10 minutes of time of first emergency call being answered. This is an improvement on the Q4 performance of 70.1% and very similar to the Q1 performance from the previous year of 74.6%.

3.2 The number of incidents in Q1, 1931, was above the five-year average for the quarter but did not exceed the maximum experienced for Q1 since 2019. The table below highlights both the lower incident demand at night, and the superior performance against the response standard:

<b>Q1 2024</b>	<b>Average Incidents per hour</b>	<b>Response Standard Performance</b>
Day	1.1	71.54%
Night	0.8	77.23%

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

3.3 The Response Standard is made up of 3 constituent parts, the **call handling time**, the **turnout time**, and the **travel time**, with targets of 90 seconds each for call handling and turnout times, and seven minutes for travel time to make up the total 10-minute target.

3.4 The Authority, when setting the response standard, knew it was a stretching and ambitious target to reach 75% of incidents within 10-minutes because the measure is highly sensitive to incident volume and profile, and many rural parts of the county cannot be reached within the target seven minutes of travel time.

3.5 Call handling performance improved in Q1, which is consistent with a return to more usual call volumes for the time of year, following the unusually high demand experienced in January and the spike in calls associated with the flooding caused by Storm Henk.

3.6 The improved performance in call handling may also be attributable to the additional time that passed, affording the control staff recruited in the last financial year the opportunity to build their confidence in managing 999 calls effectively and efficiently.

3.7 To help ensure call handling times are closely monitored, the TVFCS Joint Coordinating Group developed a suite of performance measures for control, which include a more detailed breakdown of call handling performance. This work has already enhanced our understanding of call handling performance and is helping us to understand trends with respect to call handling times by incident type.

3.8 Worthy of note is the decision taken by the Fire Authority in July 2024, in relation to the Service’s response to automatic fire alarms. Following the

implementation of these changes from September, the impact will be evaluated with respect to call handling times.

- 3.9 Our turnout times have remained good and consistent over recent years. They continue to be monitored internally to ensure any fluctuations in performance are appropriately managed.
- 3.10 Positively, travel time performance continued to improve in quarter one. We continue to closely monitor the impact of travel times and to understand where local works are impacting the road infrastructure.
- 3.11 As stated in the report, our Response Standard is an ambitious and stretching measure agreed by the Fire Authority and reports from the time the emergency call is received to the time of arrival on scene. For further context, it should be noted that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was the only fire and rescue service in England to improve its attendance times at primary fires over a ten-year period, improving our average speed of response by 22 seconds, as reported in 2022/23. All other fire and rescue services saw increased attendance times in the same period. From Home Office data for the 2023/24, we continue to perform above the average for England for most fire incident types in terms of attendance times.
- 3.12 We will continue to closely monitor and manage our performance against the Response Standard, together with longer-term trends in our incident profile and demand. In addition to the detailed work on call handling, we will continuously review the management of our resources via our internal Response Resourcing Group to ensure we are optimising our ability to respond as quickly as possible and explore opportunities in the longer-term that would support this objective.

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

- 3.13 This section of the report provides the 2024/25 quarter one performance update against Corporate Measure 14, which is the *percentage of whole-time frontline pumping appliance availability*. Overall availability for the quarter was 97.7%, which exceeds the 97.4% target.
- 3.14 RBFRS employ a lean operating model, including the Whole-time Duty System (WDS) provision. Maintaining sufficient minimum numbers of qualified firefighters requires effective management combined with flexibility and commitment to provide additional hours from staff on a pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) basis. Even with these measures, the 14<sup>th</sup> WDS appliance was degraded on 33 occasions during Q1 because of a lack of uptake for PAOT, clearly demonstrating an overreliance on overtime to maintain our baseline service provision.
- 3.15 Significant work has been undertaken to address high levels of sickness across teams and Q1 saw whole-time sickness continue to drop from 4.8% in Q4 to 4.6% in Q1, below the Service's 5% target.

## Agenda Item 11

- 3.16 The leaver profile continues to present challenges in maintaining consistent establishment levels across our whole-time duty system. Whole-time leaver numbers during the past three financial years have averaged 36 per annum, or 11% of the establishment. The total number of leavers in Q1 was 12, which was three fewer than in the same quarter the previous year, but when added to the predicted 26 leavers for the rest of the year, would equal the previous record of 38 leavers (12%) during 2022/23.
- 3.17 While the Service continues to recruit apprentice firefighters to replace leavers, the number of WDS does fluctuate throughout the year, which results in the use of PAOT to cover shortfalls due to sickness and training. The overtime budget is currently forecast to be £395,000 overspent for the year. However, thanks to the Authority's decision to recruit to an additional 10 firefighter posts, the cohort of 18 apprentices that is due to arrive on stations in November should ensure a healthy buffer above establishment, despite the challenging leaver profile.
- 3.18 By virtue of staff turnover during the past two years, the Service now has a significant proportion (39%) of operational staff in development roles. The training and assessment requirements add further pressure to the management of appliance availability. Service Delivery management continues to work closely with colleagues in learning and development to minimise the impacts of training and development on availability by planning and scheduling courses around other demands.

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

- 3.19 The report also details performance against Corporate Measure 15, which sets a target of *50% of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)*. This measure is being applied across the individual and overall availability of the Service's five on-call appliances. The overall availability for on-call appliances in Q1 was 34.1%, a 7.4% reduction against the quarter four performance and 15.9% below target. However, On Call appliances were available for 27 of the 33 shifts when the 14<sup>th</sup> WDS appliance was degraded, meaning P6 could have been enacted to maintain our baseline pumping appliance availability on more than 80% of occasions.
- 3.20 The Q1 performance continues to reflect the sensitivity of the on-call system. The table below provides year-on-year availability for the previous two financial years. Notably, since the Covid years, the 50% target for availability has not been met in any quarter, and availability has fluctuated with a low of 33.5% to a high of 46.5%.

Year	Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.
2023/24	46.5%	38.4%	33.5%	41.5%

<b>2022/23</b>	44.4%	40.3%	35.9%	41.7%
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*Year on year comparison Identifying Covid restrictions in 2020.*

3.21 The table below shows availability performance by station with previous quarter figures in red for comparison. Performance deteriorated in Q1 at all stations except for Lambourn, where a temporary watch manager was appointed following a period with no supervisory manager at the station:

<b>5. Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)</b>					<b>2024/25</b>
<b>Station</b>	<b>Q1 (Q4 2023/24)</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Year to Q1</b>
Crowthorne	43.2% (61.5%)				43.2%
Hungerford	38.8% (47.5%)				38.8%
Lambourn	3.7% (1.7%)				3.7%
Maidenhead	19.0% (29.8%)				19.0%
Mortimer	65.8% (67.2%)				65.8%

*On Call fire engine availability by station.*

3.22 Evidence suggests that the 7.4% overall reduction in availability was primarily due to the number of leavers from the On Call establishment. Despite the recruitment of 15 new On Call staff, the loss of 19 trained firefighters led to an overall reduction from 65 to 61.

3.23 The overall reduction in staffing has been exacerbated by the requirement for new staff to undertake extensive training before they are able to wear breathing apparatus and become part of the 'critical crew'. During Q1, 14 new firefighters were still undertaking the On Call Training Programme (OCTP).

3.24 Crowthorne has experienced a 17.3% drop in availability since Q4. This has been down to a mixture of reasons including transferees to WT either reducing their hours or leaving the station altogether. On a positive note, it is anticipated before the middle of Q2, 3 of those on OCTP at the station will move into development and be classed as critical crew for the station.

3.25 Hungerford's availability has fluctuated in Q1 due to key personnel being either on restricted duties or sick. However, the station had a new starter and should also see another firefighter become part of critical crewing for the station in Q2.

3.26 The appointment of a temporary watch manager at Lambourn has had a positive impact on morale and a new firefighter that joined in Q1 is making good progress with their OCTP.

## Agenda Item 11

- 3.27 Maidenhead's On Call availability tends to fluctuate from month to month as crewing is predominately reliant on dual contract personnel. This is being addressed with a drive to increase the number of purely On-Call firefighters. Positive recruitment at the station has resulted in six new firefighters joining the station in Q1 who are currently working through their OCTP.
- 3.28 Mortimer saw a marginal decrease but still managed to maintain its availability at over 65% during Q1. Mortimer also welcomed a recruit to the station in Q1.

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

#### 4.1 Commitment 3 – Response

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

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

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

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

- 7.1 None identified.

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

- 9.1 None identified.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

**11. APPENDICES**

11.1 None

**12. CONTACT DETAILS**

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

12.2 Tom Brandon, Area Manager, Response and Resilience

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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	21.10.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal assessment of effectiveness within discipline	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 22/23	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Q1 Performance Report	A&GC	21.10.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Annual Treasury Report and Mid-year report	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Productivity and Efficiency Plan	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	Budget Lead	Part I
Culture Development Update	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Ad-hoc	Note	CFO	Chair	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Workwear Project	Management Committee	04.12.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Property Asset Management Strategy	Management Committee	04.12.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	Strategic Assests and Sustainability Lead	Part I
Langley Refurbishment	Management Committee	04.12.24	Ad-hoc	Note	HoA		Part 1
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	12.12.24	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Lease changes	A&GC	30.01.25	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	A&GC	30.01.25	Ad-hoc	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 23/24	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Governance Statement 22/23	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Gender, Ethnicity and Equality Pay Gap	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	10.02.25	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	10.02.25	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
AFA update	Management Committee	10.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	AM C&P		Part 1
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	10.02.25	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Approve	MO	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
CRMP 6 evaluation	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	CRMP Lead	Part I
Annual Budget 24/25, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	17.03.25	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	Member Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances / Code of Conduct annual consultation results	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	24.03.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
	Management Committee						
Corporate Calendar 2025/26	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I

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

**Qualifications:**

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

is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest

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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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