

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>22 JULY 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>FLEET REPLACEMENT CAPITAL SPEND APPROVAL</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>PAUL BROOKS, HEAD OF ASSETS</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR SHEPHERD-DUBEY</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) has a proactive planned fleet and equipment replacement programme which seeks to renew vehicles and operational equipment and ancillaries that are at the end of their expected life.
- 1.2 In July 2023, the 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.
- 1.3 The ongoing fleet replacement programme is a steady state programme. RBFRS has aligned the front-line appliance replacement profile to a 12-year cycle as recommended by the National Fire Chiefs Council. Other fleet assets will be life cycled based on several factors, including emerging operational needs, reliability, condition and sustainability. The replacement programme will be reviewed regularly opportunities are sought to build a more environmentally sustainable fleet where operationally and financially viable.
- 1.4 This paper and attached summary appendix seeks to update the Management Committee (MC) on fleet replacement progress and to gain approval to draw down on capital funds of up to £220,000 for the prudent replacement of fleet assets, in line with the SAIF provisions.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Management Committee is requested to:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** capital expenditure of up to £220,000 over one year for the fleet assets as identified in Appendix A.
- 2.2 **NOTE** that the budget request for the fleet requirements represents a 20% reduction on the forecasted SAIF 2024 provision (see paragraph 6.2).

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In 2015, a review of the RBFRS fleet was completed which identified that RBFRS had the second oldest fire appliance fleet amongst English fire and rescue services. It also initiated the development of the RBFRS Fleet Strategy, which sets out the medium to long-term replacement profile for all vehicles within RBFRS. This strategy aims to ensure the whole fleet is effective and flexible to meet the Prevention, Protection and Response aspirations of RBFRS.
- 3.2 Since 2017, 19 new frontline pumping appliances have been delivered into service. The Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (Royal Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services) have worked together to design and procure a standard fire appliance to enhance the operational response of the three services when deployed by Thames Valley Fire Control Service.
- 3.3 The Management Committee endorsed a budget of £2,874,000 in July 2023 to commit to the purchase of 8 new frontline appliances and orders were placed to initiate that replacement programme.
- 3.4 In addition to the transformation of the fire appliance fleet, the Service acquired a new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) in 2021 and a new off-road capable pumping appliance in 2022. The service has also invested in off-road light vehicles adapted to better deal with wildfires.
- 3.5 Besides the 'red fleet' appliances and large special vehicles covered above, the Assets service is responsible for smaller specials like water rescue vans along with 'white fleet' cars and light vans and myriad operational equipment assets. This paper focuses on white fleet assets only.
- 3.6 Sustainability and reducing our environmental impact is important and hybrid vehicles are routinely being incorporated into the fleet and five fully electric vehicles are now in service enabling the impact to be reduced even further.

## **4. REPORT**

- 4.1 The three-year fire appliance replacement programme as endorsed by the RBFRA Management Committee on 11 Jul 23 is progressing and the first three appliances are scheduled for delivery between November 2024 and October 2025.

- 4.2 The latest position and detailed requirements for the white fleet replacement/upgrade programme is detailed at **Appendix A**. In summary:
  - 4.2.1 The profile for the next 12 months calls for the replacement of six light support vans.
  - 4.2.2 In the interests of efficiency and sustainability, three existing Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) emergency response cars that were planned for replacement in 2024 are to be retained for at least another 12 months realising a saving of £60,000. The vehicles have efficient, environmentally compliant engines, are in excellent condition and their retention will not affect operational capability.
- 4.3 A fleet review will be carried out in 2024/25 to assess options for further rationalising assets to ensure investment decisions are appropriately informed and matched to Service requirements and risks.
- 4.4 There have been extraordinary pressures within the vehicle and equipment segment caused by global supply chain pressures, continuing conflict in the Ukraine and Middle East, emerging threats to global maritime trade in the Red Sea and the surging costs of living. Price increases greater than 10% have been common in the last 12 months and are unlikely to subside substantially, but every effort will be made to achieve value for money.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 5.1 **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.
- 5.2 **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.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial details are contained in the appendix to this report. In summary, RBFRS is seeking approval to spend up to £220,000 on its fleet over the next year on assets that have been identified for replacement or upgrading.
- 6.2 The budget request is £50,000 less than the provisions contained in the SAIF 2024 representing a c20% saving over the forecasted amount of £275,000.
- 6.3 Every effort will be made to value engineer requirements and balance out risk to ensure that best value for money is achieved. To support this, and to improve governance and reporting, a Fleet and Equipment Delivery Group will be formed by the Head of Assets.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Not applicable.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Equality impact assessments have previously been included in the contract for the replacement of appliances and assessments will be completed for other assets as / if required.

## **9. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 If RFBRs does not replace or upgrade its fleet in a timely manner, there is risk of increased failures, increased running costs and technological fade.

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

- 10.1 As previously reported, and out of the scope of this paper, the contract for the replacement of fire appliances is common to the three Thames Valley Services and is managed in a collaborative manner.
- 10.2 Opportunities using collaboration with partners and other FRS to improve efficiency and/or effectiveness to procure fleet will always be explored and exploited if beneficial. In the context of this paper, collaboration is being carried out with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service under the Fleet Joint Working Agreement.
- 10.3 Where possible, existing framework agreements are utilised for procurement to enable collaborative benefits to be realised.

## **11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Head of Finance and Procurement were consulted during the preparation of this report.
- 11.2 The Lead Member for Strategic Assets and Sustainability and the Monitoring Officer were consulted during the preparation of this report.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 [Strategic Asset Investment Framework \(rbfrs.co.uk\)](https://rbfrs.co.uk)

## **13. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A – Fleet Replacement Summary Plan July 2024.

## **14. CONTACT DETAILS**

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

## APPENDIX A to Management Committee Fleet Report July 2024

### FLEET REPLACEMENT CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY PLAN JULY 2024

#### Introduction

- A1. White fleet requirements are constantly shifting depending on accurately predicting operational needs and due to in-year unforeseen dilapidation because of wear and tear or damage. The white fleet replacement profile for the next 12 months calls for the replacement of six support vans. In the interests of efficiency and sustainability, three existing Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) emergency response cars that were planned for replacement are to be retained for at least another 12 months realising a saving of c£100,000.
- A2. The current RBFRS fleet strategy recommends replacement of Service-owned cars when 6 years old and vans when 8 years old. However, in the interests of sustainability and best value for the Authority, and where vehicles are in good condition and their retention will not affect operational capability, a pragmatic approach will be taken in respect of replacement planning. FDO lease scheme vehicles are treated differently, as best value is currently achieved on 3-year deals with an option to extend by one year.
- A2. To further add value to asset management, and due to the rate of change in the light vehicle market, only one year of replacements is being considered currently. Work will include continuing to look at further fleet rationalisation, operational requirements, and improvements around sustainability.

#### White fleet replacement plan 2024

- A3. The one-year fleet plan as far as can be practicably forecast is as laid out in **Table A1**. As indicated above, in all cases, sustainability is always a consideration with hybrid engines specified in the first instance. Electric vehicles (EV) will be considered in more volume once the RBFRS EV infrastructure project is rolled out in 2025 as part of the SAIF.

TYPE	VEHICLE	COSTS	FIT OUT	TOTAL	BUDGET REQUEST	REMARKS
<b>White fleet</b>						
GPV	Light van	£27,196	£3,000	£30,196		Home Fire Safety Vehicles (HFSV).
GPV	Light van	£27,196	£3,000	£30,196		HFSV.
GPV	Light van	£27,196	£3,000	£30,196		HFSV.
GPV	Light van	£29,456	£8,000	£37,456		Hydrants.
GPV	Light van	£29,456	£8,000	£37,456		Hydrants.
GPV	Light van – crew cab	£29,372	£1,500	£30,872		Training Centre.
	<b>White fleet total</b>	<b>£169,872</b>	<b>£26,500</b>	<b>£196,372</b>	<b>£220,000</b>	<b>c20% reduction on SAIF 2024 forecast.</b>

Table A1 – July 2024 RBFRS one-year white fleet plan.