



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Annual Report to Herefordshire Council

30 September 2016

Authority Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2016/17

1. Councillor D W Prodger MBE, from Worcestershire County Council, was re-elected as Chairman of the Authority and Councillor R J Phillips, from Herefordshire Council, was re-elected as Vice-Chairman.

Chief Fire Officer

2. Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates retired on 31 March 2016 following permission granted by the Authority in December 2015. Mr Yates commenced with Hereford & Worcester in 2010 and retired with over 32 years continuous service.
3. The Authority have appointed Nathan Travis BA (Hons), MPA (Warwick) as Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. With almost 23 years spent in the fire service Nathan has most recently served as Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (OFRS).
4. During his time at OFRS, Mr Travis has faced challenging operational incidents, most notably wide-area flooding in Gloucestershire in 2007 and Oxfordshire in 2013/2014 – and most recently the major building collapse at Didcot power station.
5. On a national level, Mr Travis leads the environment and sustainability reference for the Chief Fire Officers Association, which involves liaising closely with the Environment Agency to identify areas where the fire service can work more closely with them to help prevent and mitigate injury to people and damage to their communities as a result of major weather-related events.

Performance

6. The Service attended 6,459 incidents in 2015-16. This was 347 or just over 5% more than last year. Although we expect there to be fluctuations up and down in the number of incidents from year to year, we still analyse the underlying causes, with the aim of improving our targeted prevention activities. Despite the increase, though, the overall trend continues to be downward, and this year's total is still the second lowest total in the ten years we have collected data in this way.

Budget Savings

7. Since the start of the 'austerity' period in 2010-11, the Fire Authority's annual revenue budget has reduced by 16 per cent in real terms. Taking into account the additional running costs over the last five years, such as inflation pressures, national pay rises, tax increases and maintenance of property and equipment, this has resulted in a headline budget reduction from £32.6 million in 2010-11 to £32.0 million in 2016-17.
8. In order to meet these pressures, we have made reductions in our workforce, including managers and support staff, made changes to crewing at fire stations, cut our spending budgets and removed two fire engines from the fleet. By 2019-20 the full implementation of these measures will be saving £6.7 million per year.

9. The External Auditors issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2014/15 financial statements and an unqualified Value for Money Conclusion on 28 September 2015. At the time of writing, it is expected that they will do the same in respect of the 2015/16 financial statements on 27 September 2016.

Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020

10. Following the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) the Fire Authority approved a two year trial period of the voluntary Day Crewing Plus (DCP) duty system for the second fire engines at Hereford and Worcester. Both Hereford and Worcester fire stations went live with the new DCP crewing pattern on Monday 11th May 2015 and the system continues to provide 24/7 availability for the second appliance. A review of the trial is currently underway and the findings will be reported to the Fire Authority in due course.

Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub Station Consultation Update

11. Following a Transformation Fund award of £2.38 million from Government to involve the relocation of three existing fire stations into a single, central hub and co-location of multiple partners (West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Severn Area Rescue Association and the British Red Cross) the Authority conducted a public consultation programme. Facilitated by an independent social research specialist, Opinion Research Services (ORS), the process ran for 12 weeks between 1 September and 27 November 2015. The consultation returned 192 completed questionnaires, 10 written submissions and one petition in addition to numerous public and stakeholder meetings and forums.
12. ORS concluded that overall there was an even balance between the level of support and the level of opposition to the proposals but emphasised that the consultation was about the principle of establishing a hub station and noted that many respondents felt unable to form a definitive view without knowing the proposed location of any hub. As a result the Authority approved a further phase of consultation running from 4 July to 9 September 2016 to seek the views and opinions of staff, local communities and their representatives to ensure that all views on the now confirmed two preferred locations of the hub are considered. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to the Fire Authority on 11 October 2016.

Hereford Fire Station

13. The Fire Authority is currently in discussions with West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Council regarding the development of a joint facility that will provide a new fire station for Hereford.

Dying 2 Drive

14. As part of the Service's suite of community safety initiatives the Dying 2 Drive scheme, now in its tenth year, took place in September 2015. The multi-agency road safety scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Herefordshire had the highest ever number of schools signed up, with almost 1500 young people attending.
15. The events commenced with a hard hitting road traffic collision reconstruction, involving all of the emergency services and live casualties. The reconstructions were closely followed by powerful, interactive workshops run by the Fire & Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Council, Safer Roads Partnership, West Midlands Ambulance Service and St John Ambulance. During these workshops, the consequences of bad decisions were explored and, amongst other activities, students were shown how to perform live saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

16. The feedback received has been exceptional with all schools commenting upon the clarity of the key safety messages together with the impact the sessions had on the young people who took part.
17. The 2016 Dying 2 Drive events were held at Leominster Police Station from 13 to 15 September 2016 and at Peterchurch Fire Station from 20 to 23 September 2016 in Herefordshire. In Worcestershire, the event ran at Worcester Fire Station from 27 to 29 September with an additional event planned for 4 to 6 October.

National Flood Relief December 2015

18. Firefighters were despatched to assist with flood relief efforts in the north of England as part of a national deployment programme. On 28 December 2015, the Service was requested to immediately mobilise a high volume pump (HVP) and hose module to Lancashire. A Type B boat team (powered boat and advanced water rescue) from Droitwich was also deployed to assist. During this period of flooding, a HVP Tactical Advisor was also mobilised on two occasions to offer technical support and advice.
19. The feedback from the deployments indicate that both crews were clearly regarded as highly skilled, equipped and motivated and provided assistance to significantly affected communities.

Members' Allowances

20. Members voted that the level of Members' Allowances for 2016/17 be increased by 0.2% in line with the Consumer Price Index.

Cllr R J Phillips
Vice-Chairman – Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

FURTHER INFORMATION is available on the Service's website at www.hwfire.org.uk/your-right-to-know/our-publications/