

REPORT OF THE HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY TO THE CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

Meeting Held on 14 December 2006

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. During the period 1 April 2006 to 30 September 2006 the Service attended a total of 5592 incidents (this includes all types of Fire, All False Alarms and Special Service Incidents). More statistics and details of notable incidents have been reported to the Authority and can be found on the Service's website (www.hwfire.org.uk).
2. The level of operational activity experienced in the second quarter of the year was higher than at any time since 2003/04. An initial analysis has identified extreme weather conditions as a principal factor. The Service is investigating possible actions to mitigate the effects.

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

3. The Constituent Authorities have previously been advised of the requirement under the Fire and Rescue National Framework, that all Fire and Rescue Services must produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and associated annual action plans. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a strategic overview of all aspects of service delivery and determine current and future policy. It is intended to make the Service more responsive to locally identified needs and better able to deliver community safety. Plans must undergo a full public consultation process for twelve weeks before being adopted by the Authority.
4. The Authority has received a progress report on progress against the IRMP (3) action plan 2006/07. Following consultation, the Authority has also approved IRMP (4) 2007/08. The Plan carries forward existing objectives:

	Future Response and Intervention Arrangements/Review of Emergency Cover
Objective	Continue to review the Fire and Rescue Service risk area to determine the resources and local response standards required to the identified risk.
	Flexible Crewing Implementation
Objective	Continue to review employee work patterns in order to respond to risks within the community. The review will consider flexible working, part-time working, voluntary overtime and the development of duty systems that will enable the Service to deliver an efficient and effective service.
	Road Safety
Objective	Develop a comprehensive Road Safety Strategy that will enable the Service to engage in a multi agency approach to reducing the number of killed or seriously injured on the roads. Working in partnership to educate road users and engaging with vulnerable

	groups, focusing particularly on potential and actual vehicle users whilst contributing to the wider road safety agenda through intelligence led engineered and intervention programmes.
	New Dimensions/Civil Contingencies/Chemical Biological and Radiological and Nuclear/Environmental
Objective	Continue to provide an emergency response to incidents involving hazardous materials but seeking to reduce the number of incidents at which action is taken based upon risk to life and/or the environment. To develop a more robust means of recovering costs outside of those incurred for emergency action.
	Community Safety Strategy
Objective	To develop our Community Safety strategies to incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Safety in all environments • Road Safety • Water Safety • Home Safety
	Community Safety Maintenance
Objective	To deliver on the following individual projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Outreach • Schools Fire Safety Education Programme • Home Fire Safety Checks • Arson Prevention • Sprinklers – Domestic and in Schools • Domestic Smoke Alarms • Fire Safety Training Programme for the Business Community
	Implementation of Service Re-structure (People)
Objective	Migrate to a role based Service structure which meets the needs of the organisation as determined by the IRMP/strategic objectives.
	Relocation/Development of Fire Stations
Objective	Having considered a range of implications the Service is proposing to relocate and build a number of Fire Stations throughout the two counties. The situation and reasons for proposing to relocate and build new Fire Stations are specific to each site. Further information is available in the Service's Asset Management Plan.

REGIONAL FIRE CONTROL

5. The Constituent Authorities have previously been advised of the replacement of the existing 46 local Fire Service Control rooms across the Country with 9 regional control Centres by the end of 2009. The Regional Fire Control for the West Midlands is to be located in Wolverhampton. Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to establish Local Authority Companies (LACs) to run Regional Control Centres. A West Midlands LAC was required to be established by 1 January 2007.
6. The Authority has agreed to participate as a Member of the Company and authorised officers to finalise the company documentation in order that the company may be established by January 2007. The Authority has made efforts during negotiations to

ensure that the interests of Hereford and Worcester are properly taken into account by the Company. In order to leave no doubt as to the strength of the Authority's view on this issue it has formally recorded the Authority's support for one Member of the Company, one vote and its opposition to any proposals for weighted voting. The Authority will receive further reports on the detail of the development.

URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE

7. The Constituent Authorities have previously been informed that the Authority had accepted the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's request to take receipt of an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Unit. This was under the New Dimension Programme designed to provide the Fire and Rescue Service with a national capability to respond to major emergencies. One part of the programme includes the development of a national USAR capability with specialist staff vehicles and equipment.
8. Planning permission for development of a site at Droitwich to incorporate the USAR capability has been received, although some restrictive covenants are currently being negotiated. During the building works, temporary accommodation has been arranged at Bromsgrove. Discussions have been ongoing with the Department for Communities and Local Government regarding various elements of the funding arrangements for crewing, accommodation and training facilities, the majority of which have now been satisfactorily resolved. The Authority is expected to declare the availability of its team to fulfil this new role in early 2007.

WORCESTERSHIRE SIGNPOSTING SCHEME

9. The Service has developed a Worcestershire "Signposting" Scheme. This mirrors arrangements already in place in Herefordshire, offering a single gateway to a range of services designed to help vulnerable and disadvantaged people remain in their own homes safely. This is achieved by "signposting" people to partner organisations who provide advice, support, preventative services and practical assistance.

REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2006

10. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2006 came into force in October this year and represents a major change in the enforcement of fire safety matters. Over 100 pieces of legislation were repealed or amended by the new legislation, including the Fire Precautions Act 1971 which had required certain premises to have a Fire Certificate. The new regime introduces a risk based approach to inspection, rather than requiring inspection of all premises at set intervals.

EDUCATION ACTIVITY

11. Education resources have been upgraded at both Key Stage 2 (Year 5) and at Key Stage 3 (Year 8).
12. The target group of Year 5 children has been provided with an array of new visual and interactive resources to promote their learning when Firefighters visit the schools. Firefighters across the two Counties have received full training on the use of the new supporting resources. The training will continue into the classroom via the Education team, in the forthcoming months, at the request of individual Watches and in response to need.
13. School teachers involved in the visit, will receive a new lesson plan and be asked to evaluate six children of mixed ability within their classes both prior to and one week following the Firefighters' visit. The results of the evaluations will be analysed throughout the academic year with a view to amending the teaching packs accordingly.

14. A PowerPoint presentation will now be included as part of the Year 8 fire safety teaching pack involving the consequences of hoax calls and arson. All fire safety education that is delivered in schools is continuously evaluated by the teachers and responses sent to Opinion Research Survey in Swansea.
15. Two LASER projects (Learning about Safety through Experiencing Risk) have taken place at Gorse Hill Primary School and at Redditch Fire Station reaching all Year 6 pupils in Worcester and Redditch. Retention of fire safety knowledge is particularly noticeable at such events when the children have acquired life saving fire safety skills during their input at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
16. Preparation is now taking place to 'reach' new recruits, with educational support prior to their arrival on a Watch at Station and before the new Firefighters begin their educational input into schools. Key messages to deliver will be highlighted plus general practical advice on teaching young children.
17. The Education team is trying to accommodate requests to talk to young lone parents, one of the vulnerable groups in the two Counties
18. Following Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service attending an 'Arson Combated Together' workshop in Nottingham earlier in the year and liaison with Warwickshire Arson team who use the programme of Theatre Education in their schools, research has continued into the scope of combating arson through drama productions.

YOUNG FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION (YFA)

19. During July, the Malvern Branch of the YFA embarked on a training expedition and weekend team building at Blackwell Court, near Bromsgrove. During this time a three-mile walk to a wild campsite to learn field craft was undertaken together with a high ropes course, climbing, abseiling and a raft of problem solving tasks.
20. A 180 mile hike along Offa's Dyke footpath was also arranged during the summer in which twenty-four young people participated. Funding came from a local funding group who supplied sufficient support to purchase lightweight tents, lightweight stoves, transport costs, some waterproof outer clothing and paid for all camping fees and food for the two weeks.

LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2/LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT REWARD GRANT

21. Despite periods of hot weather during the summer, leading to an increase in deliberate fires, the Fire and Rescue Service is at present still within the trend to meet the stretch targets to reduce deliberate fires within Wyre Forest, Redditch and South Worcestershire.

JUVENILE FIRE SETTERS PREVENTION PROGRAMME

22. To further the work with young people who start fires, 24 employees have volunteered from across the Fire and Rescue Service to form a team of advisors. The team consists of both uniformed and non-uniformed personnel from a wide range of departments within the organisation and will be supervised by the Juvenile Fire Setter Coordinator based within the Community Safety Department.
23. This valuable work will assist those who have been referred by the Youth Offending Teams and other bodies across the two counties to prevent re-offending in arson related activities.

MARKETING

Road Safety-1

24. It has been identified that young male drivers aged between 16 and 24 years old are at a statistically high risk of being involved in a serious vehicle collision. As part of the road safety strategy, a Retained Watch Manager (an accident investigation specialist) and the Service's Marketing Officer attended 'Max Power Live' the largest UK event that many of these drivers attend. Promotional key-rings with a road safety message were given out at the event from the Highways Agency stand supported by West Midlands Fire Service. Consideration will be given to raising the Fire and Rescue Service profile in future years.

Road Safety-2

25. Poorly fitted child seats put vehicle passengers at risk. A number of child car seat safety banners were produced and distributed to each District highlighting free child car seat check initiatives supported by trained staff at various Stations.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY CAMPAIGN (NFSC) TOOLBOX

26. The Services Marketing Officer attended a forum to update the NFSC Toolbox. The revised toolbox will be updated this year and contain enhanced information and features that more closely reflect the challenges faced by Fire and Rescue Services of today. The Smoke Free Worcestershire partnership has been put forward as one of the 'good practice' case studies.

NATIONAL SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE CAMPAIGN

27. The Service's Marketing Officer attended the launch of the National Smoke Alarm Maintenance campaign. This campaign involved National TV and regional radio advertising including local/regional commercial stations such as Wyvern and Heart FM. A press release was issued with the assistance of the Services Press Officer resulting in some excellent editorial coverage in the local media including promotion of our Home Fire Safety Checks for 'at risk' residents.
28. A national student fire safety campaign was launched in September aimed at 16-24 year olds. An advert based on last year's student safety campaign – highlighting the dangers of smoking and alcohol, was produced and printed on the inside front cover of cinema magazines for both Hereford and Worcester.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

29. The Service has now appointed an Equality and Diversity Manager to support the Head of Organisational Development in delivering objectives against the equality and diversity strategy.
30. The generic equalities scheme is being finalised and takes account of the implications of the Disability Equality Duty. The scheme is also being reviewed for the potential impact of the Gender Equality Duty, due to come into force in April 2007.
31. An initial review of recent age discrimination legislation and its implications for the Service has been undertaken and a programme of work to update policies and procedures in the context of the Authority's new statutory responsibilities has been put in place.
32. A regional equality and diversity strategy has now been completed and presented to the regional Human Resources board, with recommendations for future implementation.

The initial stage of the project is now complete and any future development will now be considered.

33. Progress is continuing against the objectives outlined in the Equality and Diversity Strategy, including a new positive action plan, which will develop the Service's approach to increasing numbers of women and members of black and minority ethnic communities joining the Service.

CORPORATE MATTERS

Performance Management Framework

34. The Authority has received an update on the progress of the Performance Management Framework for 2006/07. A number of interconnected external assessments are underway in 2006/07: the operational assessment of service delivery, the use of resources, and the direction of travel (a judgment on progress compared with the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment.) The final Fire and Rescue Performance Framework results for 2006/07 will be published for all Fire and Rescue Authorities in March 2007 alongside the annual audit and inspection letters.

Organisational Development Strategy

35. The Authority has received a progress report on the Organisational Development Strategy. This is designed to modernise the Service through delivering improvements in communications, culture and change management. It also sets out how progress in implementing the strategy will be delivered and monitored through the Service's Performance Management Systems.

**PAUL HAYDEN
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HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
DECEMBER 2006**

FURTHER INFORMATION

Any person wishing to seek further information on this report should contact Carole Williams on 0845 12 24454.

Further information on the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Fire and Rescue Service can also be found on the Internet at (www.hwfire.org.uk).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda papers of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 14 December 2006.