

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEREFORD AND WORCESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY TO HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Authority Appointments 2013/14**

Councillor D W Prodger MBE, from Worcestershire County Council, was elected as Chairman of the Authority and Brigadier P Jones CBE, was elected as Vice-Chairman. In addition the following Members have been appointed to the following positions:

- – Appointments Committee Chairman – Councillor D W Prodger MBE
- – Audit and Standards Committee Chairman – Councillor L Duffy
- – Audit and Standards Committee Vice-Chairman – Councillor P Grove
- – Policy and Resources Committee Chairman – Councillor K Taylor
- – Policy and Resources Committee Vice-Chairman – Councillor R Adams
- – Equality and Diversity Committee – Councillors A Fry and F M Oborski
- – Health and Safety Committee – Councillor P Watts

**Performance 2012/13**

2012-13 saw a 15.5% reduction in incidents compared to the previous financial year although Special Service Incidents increased due in part to flooding in June – July 2012 and November 2012. The overall numbers of fires have reduced as the expected seasonal increase in secondary fires during the summer was negated by the predominantly wet weather conditions during the first two quarters of 2012-13. False alarms have remained consistent with the previous year's totals.

**Financial Information**

The Service receives a budget of £32.549 million. In common with other public services, the Fire Service is facing major cuts in funding over the next few years which will result in major changes in the way the Service is provided. It is likely, therefore, that the cost of the Service will reduce significantly over this period.

For the third year running the cost of the Fire and Rescue Service to the average household in Worcestershire and Herefordshire was £73.64 (Band D council tax).

**Members' Allowances**

At their Annual General Meeting Members voted not to increase their allowances and kept them pegged to those paid in 2010.

## **Authority Plan 2013/14**

The Authority's Annual Plan for 2013/14 was approved for publication and will shortly be available on the Service's website at [www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)

## **Fire Control Officially Opened**

The new control room was officially opened at headquarters on Monday 25 March 2013 by Ltd Col Patrick Holcroft, LVO, OBE, the Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire. The previous control room operated from the fire station in Copenhagen Street in Worcester for the last 50 years.

The new system enables control room staff to quickly identify the location of the person placing the emergency calls and can identify the closest fire engine even if it is already on the move.

The next phase of the fire control project will involve linking our mobilising system to Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. This will enable us to take emergency calls for each other during extreme busy periods which are often caused by significant weather events.

## **Vehicle Fleet Update**

### **Rope Rescue Vehicle**

The new rope rescue vehicle for carrying specialist equipment for incidents, such as rescues from height or from underground (adapted from a current vehicle already in our fleet and quicker to mobilise to incidents with the equipment already on board) went into service in 2012-13 along with a new Land Rover for Malvern which will be used for off road duties.

### **Rural Rescue Vehicles**

Following an extensive review of our fire engines in our rural fire stations we made some significant progress on this project in 2012-13, agreeing design and user specifications with multi pump retained stations to be considered first. We are now looking to go out to tender to purchase five rural rescue vehicles in 2013-2014.

## **Property Update**

### **Malvern Fire Station**

Planning approval for a totally refurbished fire station was gained on 22 November 2012 and the proposal will renew the fire station at the existing location in Malvern Link. Whilst construction work is being undertaken, the fire station staff, equipment

and vehicles have been temporarily relocated to the Service's Operational Logistics site at Betony Road, in Malvern.

### **Strategic Training Facilities (STF's)**

The Strategic Training Facilities (STF) project proposed two types of training facility which would provide realistic hot-fire training scenarios for fire fighters and support their essential training programme. The first type of facility burns wood within a steel structure, broadly resembling a residential property and one such facility for South Herefordshire at Peterchurch is nearing completion. Unfortunately the proposal to deliver a facility at Kingsland in North Herefordshire will not currently proceed due to planning and land purchase issues. The second type of training facility utilises liquefied petroleum gas to create fire situations housed within a brick built building which resembles a traditional residential property. This type of facility has been constructed at Evesham and another one is also under construction at Kidderminster. The Evesham STF was completed in March 2013 with Kidderminster due to be completed during the summer.

### **Hereford Fire Station**

Officers of the Service have been in extensive discussion with Herefordshire Futures, an organisation leading on the regeneration of Hereford city. Two sites have been examined in detail as part of a major link-road development scheme, but unfortunately neither satisfied minimum requirements for a new fire station location. Officers are now examining other options including development of the existing site.

### **Factory Fire at Rotherwas**

Fire crews were called just before 8 am on Wednesday 17 April 2013 to a serious fire at premises on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate in Hereford. The fire involved a warehouse at Bathgate Flooring Ltd in Fire Lane, where at the height of the incident 10 fire engines were in attendance along with water carriers, an aerial ladder platform, plus Command and Incident Support Units. While the fire was contained fairly rapidly, firefighters remained at the premises throughout the remainder of the week and through the weekend, working to damp down and fully extinguish the blaze.

Their attendance was scaled down gradually and crews left the premises at around 3.30 pm on Monday 22 April 2013, although further re-inspections were carried out later that evening and during the morning of Tuesday 23 April 2013.

The factory unit was severely damaged as a result of the fire and there was also extensive smoke damage in the office space but some machinery at the site was salvaged. The Fire Investigation, completed on Monday 22 April 2013, concluded

that the fire started accidentally and was believed to have been caused by an electrical fault.

### **New Fire Engines – Ultra Heavy Rescue Pumps**

Earlier this year the service took delivery of two new fire engines with an enhanced 'Ultra' heavy rescue capability (termed UHRP's). These fire engines operate as a normal fire engine most of the time, but also have an enhanced capability to deal with road traffic collisions that involve heavy or large vehicles such as lorries, trains or coaches. This type of incident requires specialist equipment and training to safely deal with extremely large vehicles and structures, under emergency response conditions. The capability to deal with these incidents was previously not incorporated into a normal fire engine, but formed part of a separate specialist response vehicle based at Droitwich, which has now been decommissioned.

The new vehicles are now fully operational following an extensive period of training and familiarisation and are based at Droitwich and Hereford Fire Stations, offering an improved level of operational cover, equipment and response times across both counties. An additional benefit from the provision of these two new fire engines is that it has displaced the two previous fire engines based at Droitwich and Hereford and allowed them to be relocated to Ewyas Harold and Leintwardine in Herefordshire. This has led to an upgrade in the level of Road Traffic Collision equipment that is provided at these two locations at no additional cost.

### **Large Animal Rescue**

The Service has now adopted the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) model for the management of incidents involving the rescue of large animals. This will mean that all operational staff will receive standard training across the summer on how to deal with these incidents as the first responding crew. This training will be augmented by the provision of two specialised teams in Bromyard and Pershore that will be trained to a higher level to resolve large animal rescue incidents by in-house instructors.

### **Excellence Awards**

On Thursday 18 April 2013 the Service held its inaugural Excellence Awards evening at Eastnor Castle, near Ledbury. The entire event was sponsored by Telent Technology Services Ltd, who recently provided the Service with its new command and control mobilising system as part of the wider Fire Control project.

The evening recognised the achievements of staff and some of our partners. All nominees were winners in their own right. The event itself was inspiring and touching – so many achievements and so many dedicated individuals.

Winners from Herefordshire were:

Leadership Achievement Award – Watch Commander John Chance (Ewyas Harold)  
Outstanding Contribution to Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service –  
Watch Commander John Chance (Ewyas Harold)  
Retained Duty System (RDS) Employer of the Year – 2017 Ltd. Hereford

**Brigadier P Jones**

**Vice Chairman – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority**

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to seek further information on this report should contact Committee & Members' Services on 01905 368209/241. 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](http://www.hwfire.org.uk))