

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

*(This supplements the Authority's report to Council on 19 July 2013)*

**New Constitution/Committee Structure**

Members are engaged through the work they undertake on various Authority Committees. This involves a high degree of scrutiny of the adequacy and efficiency of the Service and its policies and procedures. Additionally, Member Task and Finish Groups can be set up to look at particular issues in more detail when required and report back to the principal committees.

The Authority also has several Members who are appointed to the Authority to work with officers on issues such as Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety and Member Development.

**Financial Information**

The Authority's accounts were signed off on 28 September 2013 and the external auditors gave an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statement and an unqualified value for money conclusion.

**Authority Plan 2013/14**

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

**New Fire Stations**

During 2012-13 we made significant progress to replace those Fire Stations which have reached the end of their serviceable life or were in need of substantial refurbishment. This included work to convert the Operational Logistics site at Betony Road, Malvern, into a temporary fire station to allow the refurbishment of Malvern Fire Station which has now commenced. The Service is in discussions with partners in Hereford and Redditch over potential locations for new Stations in these areas. Planning permission has just been granted for a new Fire Station in Worcester in Copenhagen Street.

## **Sun Valley – 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade**

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the tragic fire which took place at the Sun Valley chicken processing plant in Hereford on the morning of the 6 September 1993, which sadly resulted in the deaths of Leading Fire Fighter John Davies and Fire Fighter David Morris.

A formal parade of remembrance and two minutes silence took place at Hereford Fire Station on Friday 6 September 2013.

A private wreath laying ceremony was also held at Leominster Cemetery on the evening of Friday 6 September 2013, which was attended by serving and retired staff from Leominster Fire Station.

## **Formal Agreement between Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and the Red Cross**

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has long called on the services of the British Red Cross to help support people affected by fires and other emergencies across the two counties. Now the two organisations have signed a formal agreement outlining how their partnership will work in the future.

A formal Memorandum of Understanding has been signed which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Service and the Charity in delivering the Fire and Emergency Support Service (FESS), including legal and financial considerations.

The British Red Cross attend some of the more serious fires or emergencies to offer practical or emotional support to those affected by an incident as well as welfare to front line Service personnel. A team of volunteers has been provided by the Red Cross using a specially adapted vehicle whilst the Fire Service has provided fuel and a mobile phone for use by volunteers while on Fire Service Duty.

Red Cross volunteers provide emotional support, immediate temporary shelter and practical items like clothes, food and toiletries to those affected. They can also find temporary accommodation and signpost people to other organisations that can help.

Originally there was just one FESS vehicle covering our Service area, mostly serving Worcestershire, but the Red Cross now has a second vehicle which covers the whole of Herefordshire.

## **Strike Action**

A period of strike action by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) took place between 1200 – 1600 hrs on 25 September 2013.

The Service's Business Continuity arrangements were successfully implemented. This was the result of a considerable amount of hard work and planning over the

past few weeks to ensure that a response capability was maintained to the public during the period of strike action.

Activities across the Service were co-ordinated from the Command Room at Service Headquarters which was staffed from 0900 hrs on 25 September. Throughout the period of strike action, the Service operated the following strategic locations, as well as a high proportion of our on-call stations maintaining cover as normal:

- Hereford TA Centre
- Hindlip
- Kidderminster TA Centre
- Pershore Fire Station
- Redditch TA Centre
- Sea Cadet Centre, Worcester

During the course of the day, the above locations, and wholetime fire stations, were visited by Senior Officers.

There was some picketing at sites across the two counties but this was handled in a responsible and professional manner. There was limited interest from local TV and radio media.

Thankfully the Service remained relatively quiet throughout the period of strike action and required only two mobilisations to be made to incidents, both of which were of a minor nature.

Whilst no further strike dates have been set by the FBU, the Business Continuity arrangements implemented today have proven to be effective. Following a debrief held immediately afterwards, a number of minor adaptations will be made to the Business Continuity Plan for use in the event of any further strike dates being announced.

### **Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2014-2020**

The Authority agreed at its meeting on 3 October 2013 that the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 be approved for consultation.

The scale of savings needed by the by the Service will have an impact on services. It is clear that all parts of the Service will have to take a share from more cuts to back office support services and prevention and protection services through to the frontline response services – our fire fighters, fire engines and fire stations. Some £2 million worth of further savings have been identified away from frontline services (mostly through further internal efficiencies and management reductions) but that still leaves a gap of £2.7 million.

With such substantial savings to be found the CRMP sets out how the Service can balance its available resources against its assessment of risk, while also maintaining an effective fire and emergency response service across the two counties and with the least impact on communities.

### **Potential Combination with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report that sought approval for the Chief Fire Officer to progress discussions with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service regarding future options for combination. A lengthy debate ensued on the merits of the proposal to enter into discussions with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. However Members perceived that they required further information before they could support Officers entering into discussions with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and it was resolved that the matter be deferred until the next meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

### **Brigadier P Jones CBE**

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

### **Background Papers**

- None identified

### **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))