

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

Meeting Held on 12 June 2006.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. During the **year 1 April 2005 to 31st March, 2006 the Service attended a total of 7851 incidents.** (This includes all types of Fire, 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).

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

2. 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.
3. The Authority has noted progress on the 2006/07 Plan and approved the draft 2007/08 IRMP Action Plan for consultation.
4. The principles of the Plan remain:
 - Strengthen capacity to improve community safety and reduce risk
 - Ensure that operational resources are best aligned to areas of greatest risk and need
 - Realign management resources in order to improve support to frontline services
 - Update Incident Command structures and arrangements to assess operational performance
 - Provide improved support to Fire Stations in rural areas and those Firefighters who work the Retained Duty System
 - Prepare for anticipated changes to fire safety legislation and enforcement, principally the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order; and
 - Ensure that Fire Stations are appropriately located and have the necessary facilities to provide an efficient, effective and economic service in compliance with statutory duties.

REGIONAL FIRE CONTROL CENTRE

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.
6. The Authority has responded to a Government consultation exercise on the ways in which it would expect local authority companies to operate as vehicles for delivering and running the network of regional fire and rescue control centres (RCCs). It has also noted that the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006/08 stated that all Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure these companies are established by specified dates, with the first wave to be in place by 1 August 2006 and with the West Midlands RCC to be established by 1 January 2007.
7. In making its response to Government the Authority has emphasised the importance of ensuring that it is equitably represented on the Board of any Company which is formed. It has also expressed some concern about the challenging timescale for implementing the project. It has requested that Local Members of Parliament are informed of the position.

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

New Posts

8. Further expansion of the department in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has enabled a wide range of vital new initiatives to contribute positively to the overall aims of the organisation and to meet Local Area Agreement targets.
9. There are now four new Community Safety Advisors based in the target LAA areas of Redditch, Worcester, Kidderminster and Hereford. The post holders are highly qualified and experienced in multi agency working in vulnerable communities and have made a significant impact in getting fire safety messages across to those at most risk in the community.
10. A large number of projects are now planned and excellent links have been made with partner agencies in all areas. This has raised the Service's profile in many communities and with key partners, in turn enabling vital information sharing to take place. As an example, vital links have been made with local Housing groups, West Mercia Police, Sure Start, Crime and Disorder Forums and Community Safety Partnerships.
11. One of the main aims of the new posts is to involve some of our key partner agencies in conducting Home Fire Safety Checks for each of their client groups. It is envisaged that this will increase access to vulnerable and at risk groups. Training sessions have been planned for members of Social Services, District Nurses, Carers and Health Visitors.
12. In addition to the extensive range of planned initiatives, the new post holders will be able to make a positive contribution to the recruitment of minority groups into the Service.
13. In response to the need for support in reducing hoax calls and incidents of arson, significant progress has been made with the appointment of the new Juvenile Firesetters Co-ordinator post. This is a vital role for the organisation and an area in need of specialist attention. A full audit of our current position is presently being conducted, as the number of young people involved in fire setting activity continues to grow. Several of new schemes are in the pipeline in partnership with other

agencies including the Youth Offending Team.

14. Working closely with West Midlands Fire Service, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service designed a Regional commercial radio campaign to cover the Central region, in relation to a Home Fire Safety initiative together with raising awareness of hoax calls.
15. In accordance with the aims of the Youth Strategy and the National 'Children and Young Peoples Strategy' a Youth Services Officer has been appointed. This new post will enable further expansion of a range of initiatives for young people outside of the mainstream arena. Many of these initiatives have been piloted by the department including 'Hot Squad' and targeted 'Work Experience' courses. Such programmes are aimed at raising the self-esteem and confidence of disaffected young people and therefore increase school attendance. The post holder will also be responsible for the coordination of all 'Crucial Crew' events for the Service and joins us with a wealth of specialist youth work experience and partnership working.

Worcestershire Partnership

16. The Worcestershire Partnership Board, which is the County level Local Strategic Partnership, has accepted the Service's application to become a member of the Worcestershire Partnership Board. The Authority has welcomed the news and proposed that the Herefordshire Local Strategic Partnership Board should be encouraged to follow the same course.

Fire Safety

17. The Service is supporting a number of watch based initiatives including 'Heart Smart Homes' in partnership with 'Sure Start' and 'Smoke Free Worcester'. The aim of this project is to reduce the number of parents smoking at home and in front of young children. The initiative will pilot in key target areas of Worcester and involves young and lone parents learning about the consequences of smoking and receiving smoking cessation advice. In conjunction with this, the families will also receive Home Fire Safety Checks and will enter into a contract with partners to avoid smoking in the home. The programme was officially launched in May 2006.
18. A highly successful multi-agency event took place at SHQ to demonstrate various alternate smoke alarm alerting devices to those with hearing and visual impairment. All agencies agreed to assist the Service in meeting our overall aims in keeping this vulnerable sector of the community safe.

National Activity

19. The Community Safety department continues to be at the forefront of National activity and have hosted visits from a range of other Brigades as an example of National best practice in Community Safety. New ground breaking projects for road and water safety are in the planning stage and will be launched this year and the significant contribution made to the new national education programme for the ODPM has been recently acknowledged.

Regulatory Reform Order

20. Preparation for this Order coming into force is still on-going and in preparation for the commencement of the legislation the department is continuing to train its Inspectors. Training has also taken place at 9 venues throughout Hereford and Worcester to increase the awareness of commerce and industry.
21. Although the Fire Precautions Act ceases to have effect when the Regulatory Reform Order comes into force in October 2006, the ability of the Fire and Rescue Authority

to prevent the use of premises by the issue of Prohibition Notices will remain under the new legislation.

Marketing

Business

22. A business related Fire and Rescue Service advertisement and editorial copy will be published in the Wychavon Business Guide. This is designed to profile Legislative Fire Safety Departments, the Training and Development Centre and also remind local businesses about the enhanced skills and good working practice that employing Retained Firefighters can bring.

National Chip Week 13 -20 February 2006

23. During national Chip Week, the Service issued important safety messages about the risks of fire caused by unattended cooking and highlighted how those risks significantly increased when using a chip-pan (or similar).

National No Smoking Day

24. National 'No Smoking Day' presented the Service with an excellent opportunity to highlight the increased risks of death and injury from smoking materials in and around the home. Working with Smoke Free Worcestershire and Herefordshire PCT, posters were issued promoting the Services safety messages and the smoking cessation services provided by both PCTs.

Radio Campaigns

25. Hard-hitting fire safety adverts were produced featuring Firefighters and Control staff from both regions. These were simultaneously broadcast on Wyvern FM, Heart FM, and Galaxy radio transmitters throughout February and March 2006. The adverts were designed to make listeners ensure good fire safety in their homes, and provide information about Fire Service Home Fire Safety Checks for those who were in need.
26. The campaign produced a noticeable increase in HFSC requests with a significant number of referrals for North Worcestershire. Based on RAJAR figures this joint fire service message potentially reached an audience of approximately 1.25 million individuals across central England.
27. An agreement has been put in place with Chrysalis Radio who produced the adverts for both Services for future Community Safety use.

Fire Appliances

28. A series of safety messages have been added to a number of Fire Appliances promoting both road and fire safety. The road safety messages have been strategically placed so that passing drivers will (in most cases) see it when an appliance is present at a Road Traffic Collision.

Water Rescue Strategy

29. The water safety strategy continues to be developed. The Service recently worked in partnership with the Royal Lifesaving Society to design a Water Safety Awareness Pack to be delivered in schools. This pilot scheme is currently being delivered by volunteers from Evesham Fire Station and Mercia Inshore Rescue Association, with a view to becoming a national initiative in the coming months.
30. The Service is enhancing its water rescue capability with specialist rescue teams

being trained by the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service. When completed it will strengthen the specialist rescue capability at Hereford, Worcester, Evesham and provide a new unit at Kidderminster. Inter-agency arrangements have been made with the Police and Ambulance service to co-ordinate our response to water related incidents and we now have operational support from the voluntary rescue agencies.

31. The Service is further developing the skills and experience of our existing water rescue instructors through training delivered by the Charlotte Fire Department in North Carolina. This training has been developed in response to the severe flooding that typically follows hurricane events. In recognition of the ongoing partnership between our two fire and rescue services working on behalf of U.K and U.S.A National Emergency Planning Community, training will be provided free of charge for 12 H&WFRS staff.
32. Finally, the Chief Fire Officer has agreed to visit the U.S.A separately, both to contribute to the Senate enquiry into Hurricane Katrina and to share details about U.K national planning arrangements with counterparts in the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Equality and Diversity

33. A full review of the Equality and Diversity Strategy is underway, which is focused on the outputs and achievements of the Service's approach to Equality & Diversity to date, and identify recommendations for the continued achievement against the Equality Standard for Local Government. .
34. The Fairness at Work Advisory Group is considering current priorities for the 2006/07 year, and continues to prioritise core objectives, especially this recruitment of women and ethnic minorities to the Service.

ETHICAL ISSUES

35. The Authority has noted the annual report of its Standards Committee. As previously mentioned, a key piece of the Committee's work over the forthcoming months will be an ethical audit of the Authority. Public confidence in the integrity of local democracy is vital and is the main aim of the national ethical framework. The Committee has decided that it is opportune to take stock and by undertaking an ethical audit review how the Authority is responding to the requirements of the ethical framework. This will assess the degree to which ethical standards play a part in decision making, both on the part of the Authority and also the individuals elected to it. It is a demonstrable assessment of the reputation, both actual and perceived of the organisation and also acts as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.
36. The Authority has adopted an ethical framework. This will form the foundation for values and behaviours within the Service and incorporates current good practice in the area of equality and diversity.

CORPORATE ISSUES

Strategic Service Planning Process

37. The Service commissioned a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers on how best to improve the Authority's Strategic Planning process. The Authority has noted that the principles behind PricewaterhouseCoopers' recommendations have already been incorporated within the Corporate Plan for 2006/07.

Corporate Plan

38. The Authority has approved the Corporate Plan for 2006/07.

Finance

39. The Authority has been informed of the Revenue and Capital budget out-turns for 2005/06. The actual outturn underspending on the Revenue budget of £0.041million is a successful outcome and there has also been a modest slippage on the capital programme.

Code of Corporate Governance

40. The Authority has reviewed its Code of Corporate Governance and made a number of minor updates.

Other Corporate Issues

41. The Authority has also noted progress on arrangements for the management of risk and business continuity, asset management and the ICT Strategy.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

42. Community Events offer the opportunity for Members and local communities to meet their Firefighters, many of whom are Retained Firefighters who live and work within these same communities.
43. The events allow the Service to present both Community Fire Safety information by demonstrations and other visual displays, and other operational information relating to the service the Service provides. The events vary but each Station commits considerable time and effort to making public access fun and informative.

STATION	DATE	TIME	VENUE	EVENT HELD	BEING
Pershore	29 May 2006	10:00 – 16:00	Pershore Station	Open Day	
Worcester	03 June 2006	11:00 – 15:00	Station 21	SureStart Launch	
Worcester	10 June 2006	10:00 – 18:00	Arrow Valley	Dragon Boat Race	
Ewyas Harold	16 June 2006	1900 - 2100	Ewyas Harold	Open Evening with refreshments	
Kidderminster	17 June 2006	TBC			
Ledbury	17 June 2006	TBC	Ledbury Station	Open Day	
Droitwich	24 June 2006	12:00 – 16:00	Droitwich Station	Open Day	
Whitchurch	July 2006	TBC	Whitchurch	Carnival	
Bromyard	02 July 2006	TBC	Bromyard	Gala	

Worcester	08 July 2006	09:00 – 18:00	Stourport Marina	Water Safety Day
Leintwardine	08 July 2006	13:00 – 17:00	Leintwardine School	School Fete
Worcester	09 July 2006	10:00 – 18:00	Worcester	Dragon Boat Festival
Evesham	22 July 2006	TBC	Badsey	Fire Appliance to Badsey Flower Show
Worcester	23 July 2006	11:00 – 15:00	Upton Marina	Water Safety Day
Worcester	29 July 2006	11:00 – 15:00	Station 21	Road Safety Day
Worcester	Late June or mid August	TBC	Arboretum, Worcester	Ethnic minority recruitment day & Community fete
Ross on Wye	06 August 2006	TBC	Ross on Wye	River Carnival
Hereford	19 August 2006	10:30 – 15:30	Hereford	Open Day
Kington	20 August 2006	TBC	Kington	Vintage Car Meeting
STATION	DATE	TIME	VENUE	EVENT BEING HELD
Upton upon Severn	26 August 2006	TBC	Upton-Upon-Severn Water Festival	Promotion Of Community Fire Safety
Fownhope	28 August 2006	TBC	Woolhope	Fete
Eardisley	28 August 2006	TBC	Eardisley	Carnival and Sports Day
Peterchurch	28 August 2006	TBC	Peterchurch	Sports and Social Day
Stourport	09 September 2006	TBC		
Kingsland	10 September 2006	TBC	Kingsland	BBQ
Worcester	Late September	TBC	Maggs Centre (Opposite Worcester Station)	Rough Sleepers Awareness Day
Bewdley	August	TBC		

Bromsgrove	TBC			
Pebworth	TBC			
Broadway	TBC			
Tenbury	Summer		Tenbury Wells	Open Evening/Social BBQ

**PAUL HAYDEN
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HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
JUNE 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 12 June 2006.

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