



Hereford & Worcester
Fire Authority

Fire Authority Annual Report

2014-15



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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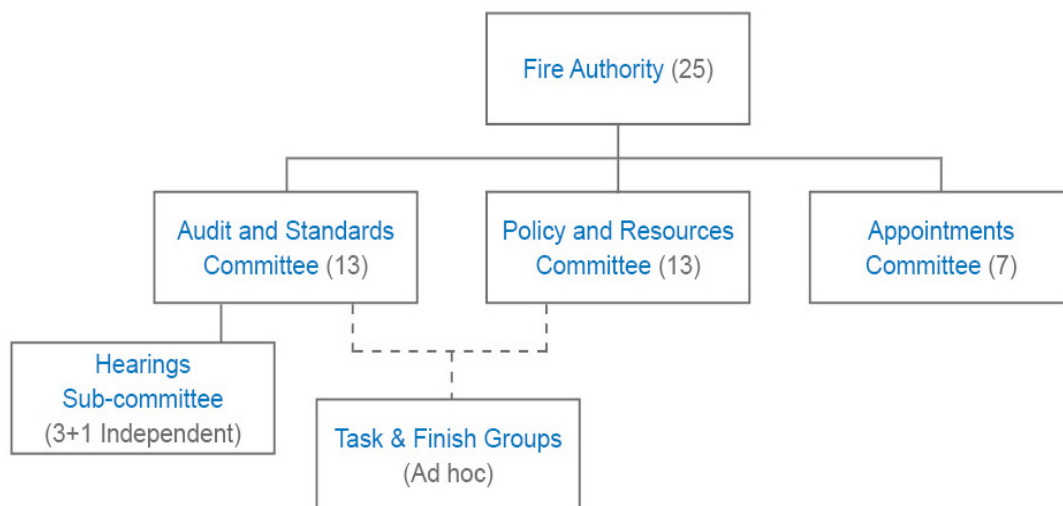


Our Authority

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority ensures that there is an effective Fire and Rescue Service across the two counties. The Authority consists of 25 Elected Members (19 from Worcestershire County Council and 6 from Herefordshire Council), who oversee the work of the Fire and Rescue Service in delivering its services in relation to fire prevention, fire safety, firefighting and rescue, including from road traffic collisions and other emergencies such as flooding. The Authority sets the budget and approves the overall direction for the Service. It holds the Chief Fire Officer to account to ensure that the Service has the right people, equipment and training to carry out their duties efficiently and in the best interest of the public and community.

The following chart shows the structure of the Authority and its Committees.

Political Management Structure



The Authority's main role is to:

- Set the strategic direction of the Authority and monitor Service Delivery
- Set the Annual Budget and Council Tax precept levels
- Approve the Service's plans, policies and strategies, including statutory plans such as the Risk Management Plan and the Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Report
- Approve the composition of the Committees of the Authority and develop and maintain a scheme of delegated or reserved powers.

Member Engagement

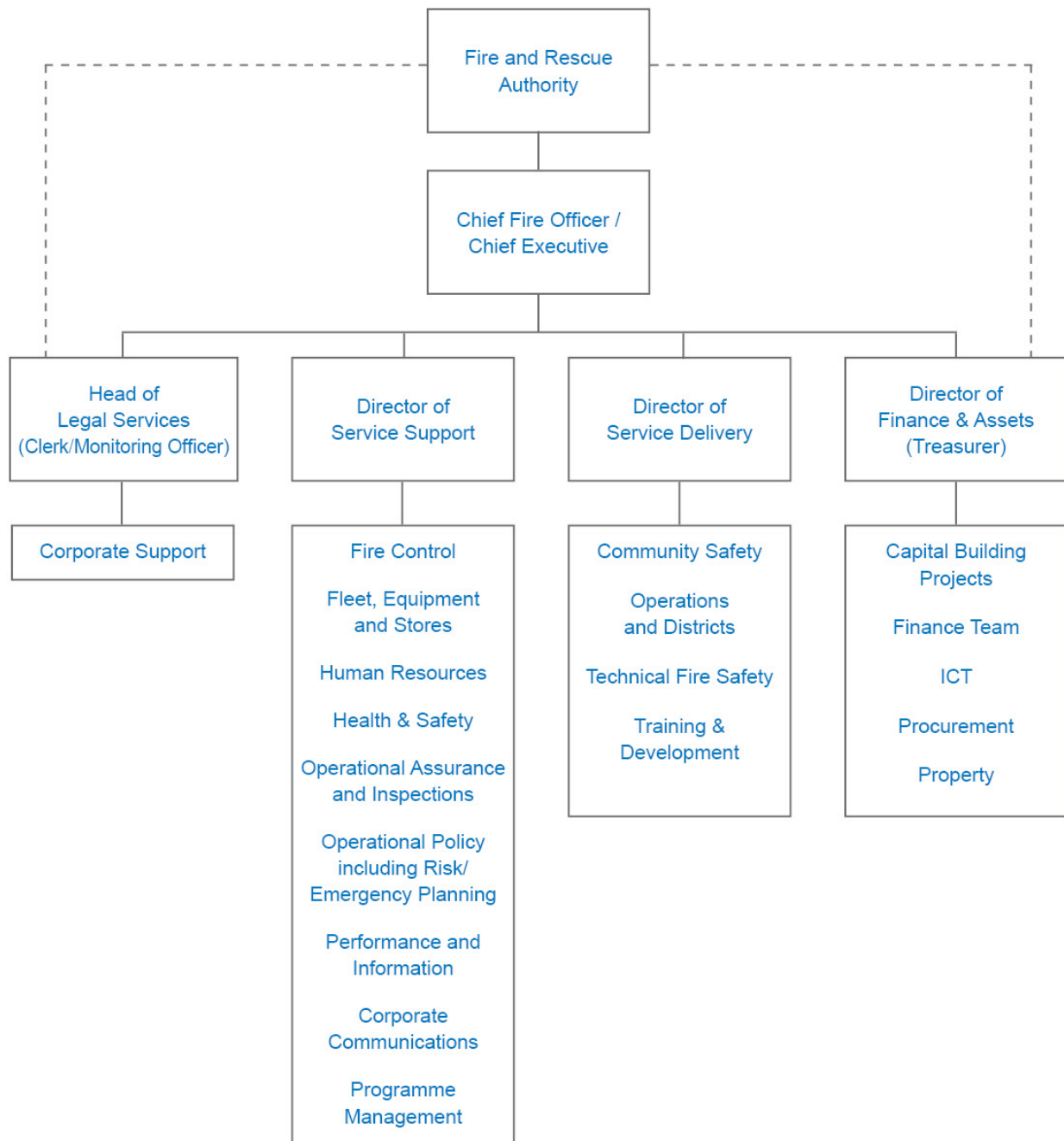
Members are engaged through the work they undertake on various Authority Committees. This involves a high degree of scrutiny of the adequacy and efficiency of the Service and its policies and procedures. Additionally, Member Task and Finish Groups can be set up to look at particular issues in more detail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

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

Our Service

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service delivers the services required by the Authority. It is led by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and a Senior Management Board. They act as the accountable body for the Service and hold Officers of the Service responsible for their area of activity.

The Service is structured into three Directorates: Service Support, Service Delivery and Finance and Assets, as shown in the following chart. Together they work to deliver a full range of prevention, protection, response and resilience services for communities in the two counties.



Our Service in 2013-14 at a glance



The Service covers an area of almost 400,000 hectares (over 1,500 square miles). It has some of the most sparsely populated rural areas in the country and just under 750,000 people reside in the two counties, predominantly in Worcestershire. (See Table 1 below).



The Service employs over 800 people on various contracts, most of whom are highly trained Firefighters, working at more than 30 locations across the two counties.



There are 27 Fire Stations, a Service Headquarters in Worcester, three District Headquarters, an Operational Logistics Centre in Malvern and a Training and Development Centre in Droitwich. There are also three Strategic Training Facilities at Evesham, Kidderminster and Peterchurch.



We received just under 10,000 emergency calls in 2013-14 and attended approximately 6,600 incidents.



We attended some 2,000 fires.



We attended nearly 600 road traffic collisions.



While we make sure we are able to respond to emergencies effectively and safely, we are also concerned with trying to prevent those emergencies happening in the first place.



We work with our partner agencies and our local communities and businesses to make sure that foreseeable risks are reduced as far as possible.

Table 1 - Herefordshire and Worcestershire demographic statistics

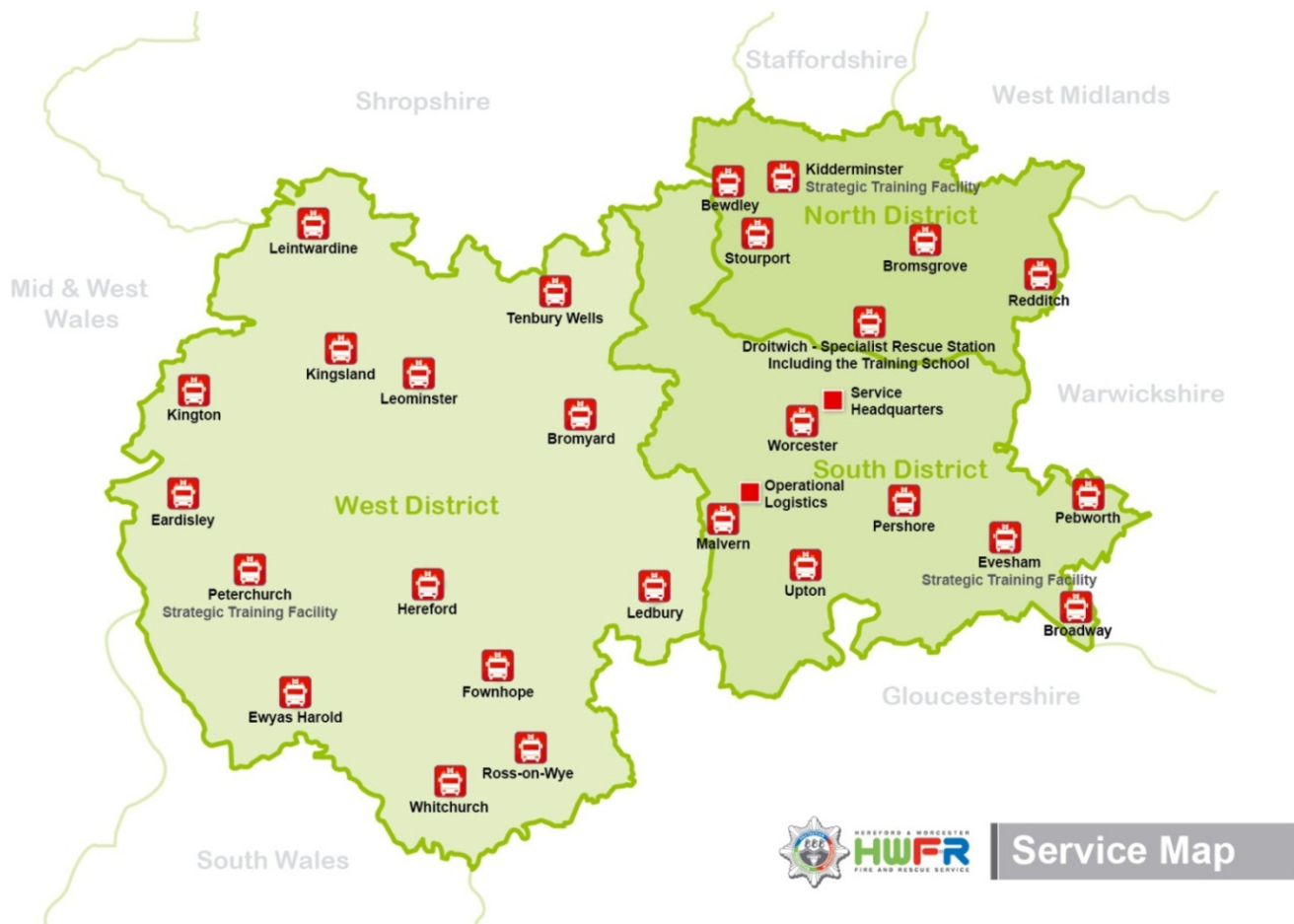
Local Authority	Area (hectares)	Population (Census 2011)	Households (Census 2011)
Herefordshire			
Herefordshire	218,000	183,500	78,300
Total	218,000	183,500	78,300
North Worcestershire			
Bromsgrove	21,700	93,600	38,300
Redditch	5,400	84,200	34,800
Wyre Forest	19,500	98,000	43,000
Total	46,600	275,800	116,100
South Worcestershire			
Malvern Hills	57,700	74,600	32,200
Worcester	3,300	98,800	42,000
Wychavon	66,400	116,900	49,500
Total	127,400	290,300	123,700
Total	392,000 (c. 1,500 sq. miles)	749,600	318,100

Source: Census 2011, Office for National Statistics

Delivering our services through our three Districts

Our fire and rescue response services are primarily organised across three geographic Districts: North, South and West, which helps us to provide a balanced response to reducing community risk throughout the two counties. This is supported by a range of support services delivered through Service Headquarters in Worcester, training services at the Training and Development Centre in Droitwich and support to fleet and supplies at the Operational Logistics centre in Malvern.

Map 1 – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Map



The three Districts are served by 27 Fire Stations strategically located across the two counties to provide an appropriate response as soon as an emergency call is received. In 2013-14 we received nearly 10,000 emergency calls requesting assistance at a wide variety of incidents, including property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, collapsed structures, water rescues, hazardous materials and animal rescues. In all, we attended 6,622 incidents across the two counties, which is around 127 incidents a week. This is similar to the previous year, and continues a general overall downward trend in incident numbers.

While the Service can never be complacent about falling incident levels, it does help to show that communities are becoming more and more aware of fire safety precautions, as well as highlighting the value of community safety activities carried out by the Service and its partners.

Table 2: Herefordshire and Worcestershire all incidents attended 2013-14

Incident type	Herefordshire			Worcestershire			H & W Total 2013-14
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	
Fire	671	453	507	2,178	1,317	1,480	1,987
Special Service	376	468	402	1,133	1,230	1,056	1,458
False Alarm	720	628	677	2,779	2,547	2,500	3,177
Total	1,767	1,549	1,586	6,090	5,094	5,036	6,622

The four busiest Fire Stations are permanently crewed 24 hours a day (Wholetime, WT). Three other Fire Stations are permanently crewed during the day (Day Crewed, DC) and by On-Call Firefighters (Retained, RDS) during the night. As of April 2014, the new combined Police and Fire Station in Bromsgrove opened. This fire station has a new crewing system called Day Crewing Plus (DCP), which means that it is permanently crewed during the day, while staff are immediately available at night, ensuring that there is no effect on the type or speed of response. The other 19 Fire Stations are crewed by On-Call Firefighters, who live locally to the Station and can respond quickly should they be called. During 2013-14, the Service operated 43 front-line fire engines from its 27 fire station.

In addition to the front-line fire engines, there are a number of specialist resources providing additional support. These resources include: four specialist boat teams with eight Fire Stations designated as Water Rescue First Responders, specialist rope rescue teams at Malvern and Droitwich, an Environmental Protection Unit at Stourport, two Aerial Ladder Platforms located at Hereford and Worcester Fire Stations, animal rescue resources at Pershore and Bromyard and several different vehicles providing off road firefighting at several locations throughout the Service area, as shown on Map 2 below. To find out more, please follow this link to our website: [Our Vehicle Fleet](#)

Map 2: Specialist Vehicles and Water Rescue Assets



In Droitwich, the fire station and the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) facility have been merged into a single, highly efficient, multifunctional operational unit. The USAR facility is part of a national resilience resource providing enhanced local search and rescue capabilities. More details on this initiative is provided in the section called 'Our Work Completed in 2013-14 (page 22).' We also host a mass decontamination unit located at Hereford fire station and a High Volume Pumping Unit at Kidderminster Fire Station.

About our Districts

North District

North District provides its services across the District Council areas of Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove, Redditch and parts of Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts. Although it's the smallest of our Districts by area, it has the highest population density, with the majority of the population living in the four largest towns of Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Droitwich.



The District has a relatively high proportion of residents aged over 65 years, representing one in five of all individuals. This is projected to increase to more than one in four within the next 20 years. The area is generally prosperous, though there are several pockets of deprivation, notably in the urban areas of Kidderminster and Redditch. The landscape is characterised by the river valleys of the Stour and Severn to the west of the District, while the M5 and M42 motorways are key features to the east.

The area is served by six Fire Stations, with Redditch Fire Station being the Service's second busiest after Worcester Fire Station. In 2013-14, there were 929 incidents within the Redditch Fire Station area, 32% of all incidents in North District.

Table 3: North District Fire Stations

	Fire Stations	Number of front-line fire engines					Specialist Vehicles
		crewing:	WT	DCP	DC	RDS	Total
North District	Bewdley					1	Argocat, Pinzgauer
	Bromsgrove			1		1	
	Droitwich				1*	1	Incident Support Vehicle, *Ultra Heavy Rescue Appliance, Water Rescue Vehicle, Rope Rescue Vehicle, USAR Vehicles
	Kidderminster		1			1	High Volume Pumping Unit
	Redditch		1			2*	*Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) Appliance
	Stourport					1	Environmental Protection Unit
	Total		2	1	1	7	11
							12

WT = Wholetime crewing, DCP = Day Crewed Plus, DC = Day Crewed, RDS = Retained Duty System also referred to as On-Call; * = included in list as a front-line fire engine. USAR = Urban Search And Rescue.

Table 4: North District incident profile by Fire Station area¹

North District		2013-14				2012-13			
Fire Stations	Fire	Special Service	False Alarm	Grand Total	Fire	Special Service	False Alarm	Grand Total	
Bewdley	57	30	30	117	32	32	35	99	
Bromsgrove	152	136	305	593	137	157	290	584	
Droitwich	77	82	118	277	80	100	174	354	
Kidderminster	182	123	340	645	157	156	336	649	
Redditch	262	176	491	929	255	193	476	924	
Stourport	96	46	118	260	86	47	109	242	
Total	826	593	1,402	2,821	747	685	1,420	2,852	

¹ note that the figures represent the numbers of incidents attended within each fire station area, not the number of attendances by fire engines at each station, because fire engines occasionally attend incidents outside their own station areas.

The following table shows the distribution of population and households across the six fire station areas and the numbers of incidents attended in each area in the last two years.

Table 5: North District population and households by Fire Station area

North District					
<i>Fire Station</i>	<i>Population of station area (2011 Census)</i>	<i>Households in station area (2011 Census)</i>	<i>Station Area (sq. miles)</i>	<i>Calls attended within station area 2013-14</i>	<i>Calls attended within station area 2012-13</i>
Bewdley	14,740	6,585	26.45	117	99
Bromsgrove	70,691	29,236	46.33	593	584
Droitwich	33,908	14,392	59.07	277	354
Kidderminster	69,347	29,950	46.33	645	649
Redditch	106,216	43,483	65.64	929	924
Stourport	29,399	12,711	52.90	260	242
Total	324,301	136,357	296.72	2,821	2,852

South District



South District covers the District Council areas of Worcester, the majority of Malvern Hills and part of Wychavon. The Cathedral city of Worcester has the highest population density with around 99,000 residents and is the largest urban area in the two counties and the predominant employment, retail and tourism centre. The District also has large rural areas, with extensive areas of agricultural land and open countryside, notably the Vale of Evesham and the Malvern Hills.

Like North District and the two counties as a whole, the District has an increasingly ageing population, which will place greater demands on health, housing and other public services in the coming years. Although a relatively affluent area, there are some significant disparities between the quality of life for people living in different localities, especially in terms of prosperity, health, crime and educational attainment. Within Worcester in particular, there are six localities that fall within the most deprived 10% of all local areas in England.² They are:

- Old Warndon, east of Cranham Drive
- Tolladine
- Brickfields
- South-West Gorse Hill
- Cranham Primary School area
- Warndon, Windermere Drive

Seven Fire Stations are located in South District, with Worcester Fire Station the busiest of all 27 Fire Stations. In 2013-14, there were 1,158 incidents within the Worcester Fire Station area, 53% of all incidents in South District.

² Six Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Worcester are within the 10% most deprived LSOAs in England (source: 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation). An LSOA is a small geographical area made up of around 1,500 residents; there are 32,482 LSOAs in England

Table 6: South District Fire Stations

Fire Stations		Number of front-line fire engines				Specialist Vehicles
crewing:		WT	DC	RDS	Total	
South District	Broadway			1		Water Rescue Vehicle, Water Carrier Argocat, Pinzgauer, Command Support Unit, Rope Rescue Vehicle
	Evesham		1	1		
	Malvern		1	1		
	Pebworth			1		*Animal Rescue
	Pershore			1*		
	Upton			1*		*Compressed Air Foam Appliance
	Worcester	2		1		Water Rescue Vehicle, Aerial Ladder Platform
		2	2	7	11	8

WT = Wholetime crewing, DCP = Day Crewed Plus, DC = Day Crewed, RDS = Retained Duty System also referred to as On-Call; * = included in list as a front-line fire engine

Table 7: South District incident profile by Fire Station area

South District		2013-14				2012-13			
Fire Stations	Fire	Special Service	False Alarm	Grand Total		Fire	Special Service	False Alarm	Grand Total
Broadway	17	12	27	56		12	13	16	41
Evesham	116	54	161	331		97	72	165	334
Malvern	85	67	193	345		67	75	229	371
Pebworth	19	4	6	29		15	9	9	33
Pershore	36	32	61	129		34	41	70	145
Upton	39	43	25	107		23	34	31	88
Worcester	312	231	615	1,158		297	269	595	1,161
Total	624	443	1,088	2,155		545	513	1,115	2,173

The following table shows the distribution of population and households across the seven fire station areas and the numbers of incidents attended in each area in the last two years.

Table 8: South District population and households by Fire Station area

South District					
Fire Station	Population of station area (2011 Census)	Households in station area (2011 Census)	Station Area (sq. miles)	Calls attended within station area 2013-14	Calls attended within station area 2012-13
Broadway	4,146	1,961	10.04	56	41
Evesham	40,473	16,971	57.92	331	334
Malvern	41,456	18,161	40.93	345	371
Pebworth	3,349	1,376	15.83	29	33
Pershore	22,053	9,510	54.05	129	145
Upton	8,498	3,698	49.42	107	88
Worcester	116,410	49,318	84.94	1,158	1,161
Total	236,385	100,995	313.13	2,155	2,173

West District

West District covers the whole of Herefordshire, which is one of the most rural and sparsely populated counties in England, and part of Malvern Hills District Council area. With just 0.8 people per hectare, Herefordshire has the fourth lowest population density of all 150 top-tier Local Authorities in England. Just over a half of the population live in the city of Hereford and the five main market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. The remaining residents live in smaller settlements and villages scattered throughout the county, often in relatively remote and hard to reach locations.

The District is served by 14 Fire Stations strategically located in Hereford City and the six market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Tenbury Wells, with other Stations forming a chain along the border with Shropshire and Wales. Hereford Fire Station is the busiest Station in the District; in 2013-14, there were 726 incidents in the Hereford Fire Station area, 44% of all incidents in West District.

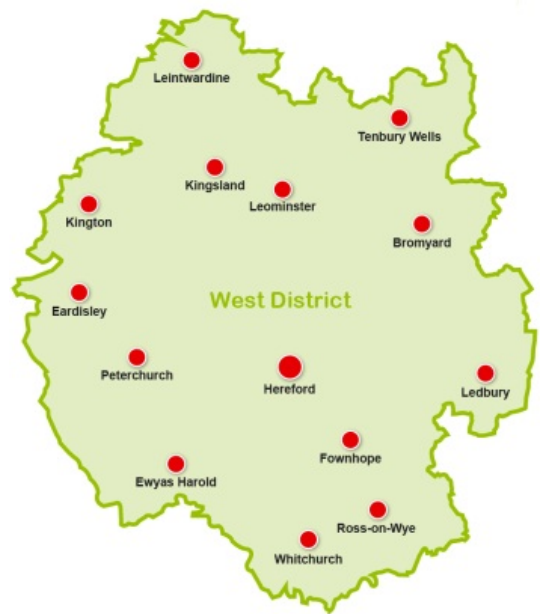


Table 9: West District fire stations

	Fire Stations	Number of front-line fire engines				Specialist Vehicles
	crewing:	WT	DC	RDS	Total	
West District	Bromyard			2*		*Animal Rescue
	Eardisley			1		
	Ewyas Harold			1		
	Fownhope			1		
	Hereford	2*		1		*Ultra Heavy Rescue Appliance, Water Rescue Vehicle, Aerial Ladder Platform, Incident Response Unit, Landrover 4x4
	Kingsland			1		
	Kington			1		
	Ledbury			2		
	Leintwardine			1		
	Leominster			2		Water Carrier
	Peterchurch			1		Restricted Access Vehicle
	Ross on Wye			2*		Water Carrier, *Compressed Air Foam Appliance
	Whitchurch			1		Restricted Access Vehicle
	Tenbury Wells			2		
		2	0	19	21	8

WT = Wholetime crewing, DCP = Day Crewed Plus, DC = Day Crewed, RDS = Retained Duty System also referred to as On-Call; * = included in list as a front-line fire engine

Table 10: West District incident profile by Fire Station area

West District		2013-14				2012-13			
Fire Stations	Fire	Special Service	False Alarm	Grand Total		Fire	Special Service	False Alarm	Grand Total
<i>Bromyard</i>	36	34	27	97		39	32	38	109
<i>Eardisley</i>	20	16	11	47		14	19	11	44
<i>Ewyas Harold</i>	14	13	14	41		8	16	7	31
<i>Fownhope</i>	7	9	5	21		12	8	6	26
<i>Hereford</i>	215	135	376	726		188	151	361	700
<i>Kingsland</i>	18	13	12	43		25	22	5	52
<i>Kington</i>	17	12	16	45		11	14	5	30
<i>Ledbury</i>	51	33	68	152		31	37	64	132
<i>Leintwardine</i>	9	17	4	30		10	6	3	19
<i>Leominster</i>	41	33	67	141		40	51	42	133
<i>Peterchurch</i>	13	15	5	33		11	10	4	25
<i>Ross-on-Wye</i>	40	40	64	144		43	68	69	180
<i>Whitchurch</i>	26	32	8	66		21	34	13	68
<i>Tenbury Wells</i>	30	20	10	60		25	32	12	69
Total	537	422	687	1,646		478	500	640	1618

The following table shows the distribution of population and households across the fourteen fire station areas and the numbers of incidents attended in each area in the last two years.

Table 11: West District population and households by Fire Station area

West District					
Fire Station	Population of station area (2011 Census)	Households in station area (2011 Census)	Station Area (sq. miles)	Calls attended within station area 2013-14	Calls attended within station area 2012-13
Bromyard	15,901	6,753	108.88	97	109
Eardisley	6,987	3,027	67.37	47	44
Ewyas Harold	5,194	2,174	69.88	41	31
Fownhope	5,755	2,465	32.05	21	26
Hereford	82,563	34,712	101.16	726	700
Kingsland	6,334	2,685	56.95	43	52
Kington	3,997	1,738	36.10	45	30
Ledbury	13,445	5,910	64.67	152	132
Leintwardine	2,602	1,134	45.95	30	19
Leominster	15,848	7,030	75.87	141	133
Peterchurch	3,886	1,569	59.46	33	25
Ross-on-Wye	18,357	8,047	50.19	144	180
Whitchurch	3,832	1,532	53.48	66	68
Tenbury	4,259	1,908	53.28	60	69
Total	188,960	80,684	875.29	1,646	1,618

Support Services

To help to ensure that we continue to deliver an effective front-line response service in our Districts, the Service has a number of essential support services. Some of these are run within our Districts themselves, such as their administration and locally based specialist officers, but most of the support services are based at three main locations:

Service Headquarters, Worcester	This is where our Fire Control is based. They receive all emergency calls and are responsible for ensuring that our fire engines get to incidents as quickly as possible. Headquarters also houses the 'back-office' departments needed to support the organisation, which provide a wide range of services through such teams as Finance, Human Resources, Information and Communications Technology, and Performance and Information, as well as the Property and Capital Building Projects teams, Community and Technical Fire Safety, and Operational Policy services.
Training and Development Centre, Droitwich	This is where much of the essential training for our firefighting crews, managers and our technical safety officers is carried out helping to maximise and enhance their capabilities and ensure that they remain up-to-date on current practice and techniques. Additional strategic training facilities where crews can gain hands-on practical experience in a controlled and safe environment complement the training centre, and are locally based at Evesham, Kidderminster and Peterchurch.
Operational Logistics, Malvern	This is where we have our workshops and supplies stores. Here our skilled mechanics and maintenance staff keep our firefighting vehicles safe and on the road; they check and repair essential safety equipment such as the breathing apparatus worn by our firefighters; and they make sure the water hydrants are working properly. We also keep our stores of firefighting equipment and personal protective work wear to ensure that all essential kit is available when needed.

Our Strategy

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has an overall strategy known as 'Our Strategy'. This approach sets out a single clear core purpose, built on strong foundations and linked by three driving principles.

The core purpose is a clear statement of our intent:

"We will provide our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services."

It recognises that we will do everything we can to ensure that we maintain a high quality service now and in the future.

In delivering the core purpose, we have adopted three firm principles against which everything we do can be measured and judged:

- **Ensuring Firefighter safety**
- **Ensuring Community safety**
- **Ensuring the delivery of quality services**

Underpinning this approach is the Authority and Service – our people, our assets and resources, our services and our plans – providing a strong foundation to build upon.

Our Senior Management Board (SMB), led by the Chief Fire Officer, is responsible for delivering the Strategy throughout the Service and shows enduring strong leadership, with managers and operational commanders each delivering their parts of the Strategy. The Fire Authority will ensure that the Strategy is focused and delivered in ways that are clear and understandable for our Communities across the two counties.

The diagram below illustrates our approach:



Our Values

We are committed to the nationally recognised values of Fire and Rescue Services which are embedded throughout the Service by our approachable and strong leadership through their hands-on style and their wish to lead from the top by example. Our values represent the spirit in which all personnel pursue our organisational aims and objectives, to ensure that the service we provide is effective, equitable and positively supports the Communities we serve.

We Value Diverse Communities

- We are committed to serving all parts of our communities
- We recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions
- We remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve

We Value Our Fire and Rescue Service

- We are passionate about maintaining our great reputation
- We focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities
- We provide the right service at the right time and in the right place

We Value Our People

- We promote safety and well-being of our staff and others
- We are committed to developing our people
- We work in an inclusive and ethical way
- We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make
- We respect and see difference as a strength

We Value Innovation, Change and Learning

- We encourage critical and lateral thinking and welcome constructive challenge
- We take responsibility for improving our performance
- We develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential

Our Performance in 2013-14

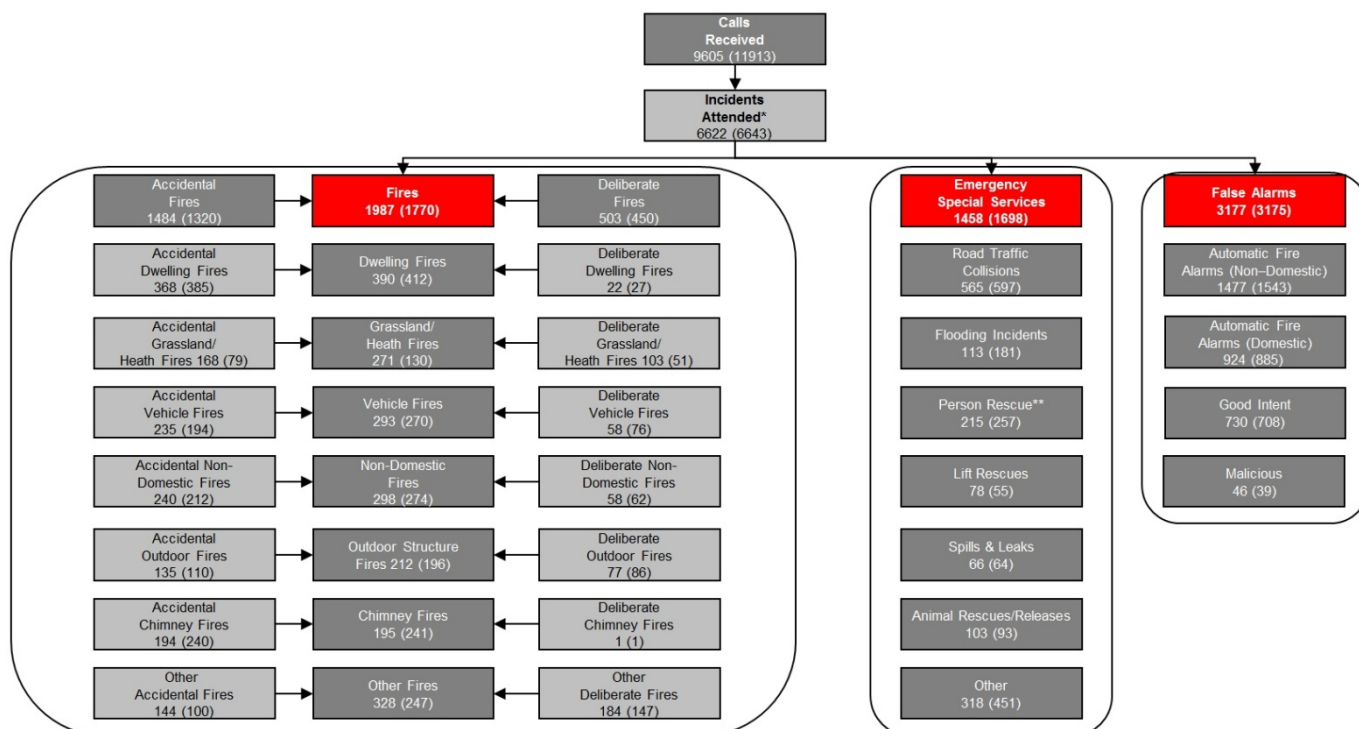
With a total of 6,622 incidents attended in 2013-14, this is a further slight decrease in numbers since last year and is the lowest total in the eight years that data has been collected in this way. The main reason for this was a considerable fall in the number of special service incidents attended this year. The overall number of fires attended increased, mainly because of a rise in the number of secondary fires such as grassland fires, and there was a very small rise in the number of false alarm incidents attended.

When assessing overall performance, the Service uses 'Key Performance Indicators' which are reported to the Authority's Performance and Resources Committee every quarter – these report can be found on the [Service's website](#). The indicators are measured using tolerance levels to test whether the figures are higher or lower than the cumulative levels expected for Quarters 1 to 4 of the financial year. Only one measure was out of tolerance at the end of the financial year, which was the percentage of building fires first attended within 10 minutes of the time of call, against the standard of 75%. This is a local standard set by the Service and it is important to note that even though the standard was not achieved in this year any response, including 1 second, over 10 minutes is recorded as a failure.

Another measure of performance is that of staff sickness levels from year to year. In 2013-14, all staff sickness levels decreased compared to 2012-13. This was mainly due to year on year decreases in both non-uniform and wholtime staff sickness, with a particular reduction in long-term sickness. 2013-14 saw an overall sickness rate of 5.92 shifts/days lost per head, comparing favourably with an average of sickness absence level of 7.8 shifts/days lost per head over the previous five years.

Summary of 2013-14 Incidents

The table below shows the breakdown of fires, special services and false alarm incidents attended by the Service last year, with the 2012-13 equivalent figures shown in brackets. These figures are used to benchmark with other Fire and Rescue Services and for reporting to the Department for Communities and Local Government through the Service's Incident Recording System (IRS). The figures do not include mobilisations to other miscellaneous incidents attended by the Service, such as attendances to incidents in neighbouring counties, those where we arrived at scene and were not required, exercises and where crews are asked to standby.

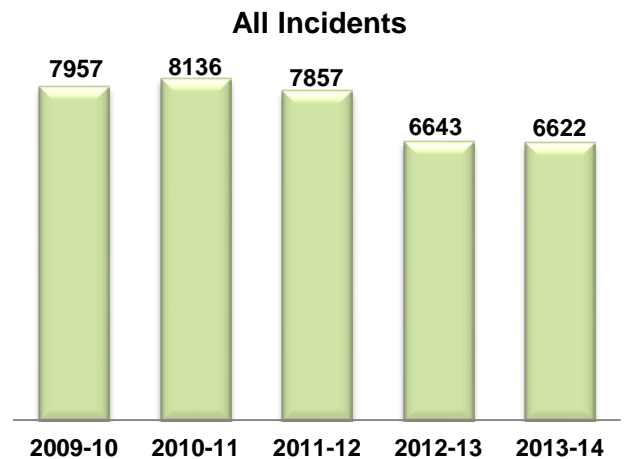


* Incidents attended within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service area only - the Service also attends incidents in other Fire and Rescue Service areas as necessary

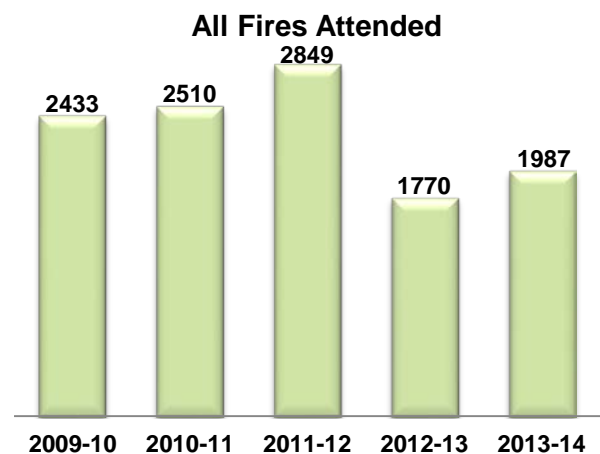
** Person rescue includes rescue from water, effecting entry/exit and other rescues.

Incident Trends

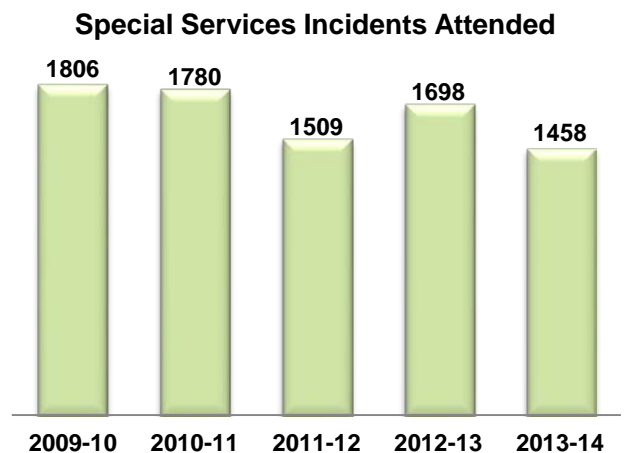
Fire Control received 9,605 calls in total throughout 2013-14, which represents a 19% decrease in calls received in 2012-13 across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Of these calls, we attended 6,622 incidents, compared with 6,643 in 2012-13. Within this figure, there was a fall in the number of special service incidents by some 14%, while the numbers of fires, (mostly secondary fires) and false alarm incidents increased compared to the previous year.



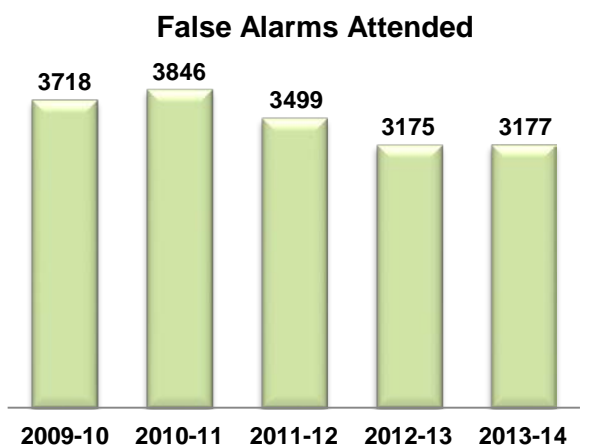
The overall number of fires attended were up by 12.3% in 2013-14 (1,987 incidents compared to 1,770 in 2012-13). Within this figure the number of primary fires, such as fires in buildings and cars and those where people were hurt, increased by 5.5% compared to last year (1,037 incidents compared to 983 in 2012-13), but was still down by 1.4% against the average of 1,171 for the previous five years. Secondary fires, such as grassland fires, increased by 38.3% compared to last year (755 incidents compared to 546 in 2012-13), but are still down by 26.7% against the average of 1,030 for the previous five years. The number of chimney fires decreased by 19.1% compared to last year (195 incidents compared to 241 in 2012-13), and is down by 18.9% against an average of 240 incidents in the previous five years.



Special Services incidents are those incidents other than fires or false alarms, and include road traffic collisions, flooding, person rescues, lift rescues, spills/leaks and animal rescues. The number of Special Services incidents attended in 2013-14 were down by 14.1% compared to last year (1,458 incidents against 1,698 in 2012-13). This represents the lowest number of special services incidents attended in the eight years this information has been collected. Although the Service attended a high number of wet weather incidents in January and February 2014, there were actually fewer wet weather incidents attended than in the previous year 2012-13.



The total number of false alarms attended increased very slightly in 2013-14 over last year, but is still the second lowest number of false alarm incidents attended in the last eight years. There was a slight increase in the number of 'false alarm good intent' incidents attended and a larger increase in the number of 'malicious false alarm' incidents compared to the previous year. This has been partially offset by a slight decrease in the number of automatic false alarms attended, which continues to represent the largest proportion of all false alarms.



Our Work Completed in 2013-14

We said in the Foreword to this Annual Report that the last year had been one of our most challenging, highlighting four of our main challenges: the budget, our new risk management plan including the fire cover review, the floods, and the industrial action. This section expands further on these issues, but it also lists a whole range of other initiatives achieved and completed during the year under the 'Our Strategy' framework.

Balancing the Budget

Without going into great detail about the financial background to the Authority's budget in this Annual Report³, it is clear that savings have had to be made to balance the budget over the last few years, and that more savings will need to be made in coming years. In plain terms, this means cuts. By last year, we had made savings of around £2.5 million mostly by reducing the workforce including managers and back office staff, by changes to crewing at Bromsgrove fire station and by cutting our spending budgets. Up to 2016-17, we expect to have to make further savings of around £4 million. During the year, we have been able to identify where more cuts can be made in our management and support services saving around £2 million over the next three years, but that still leaves £2 million which can only come from our front-line response services – our firefighters, fire engines and fire stations. The savings made so far has allowed us to balance the budget for 2013-14, and some small improvements in grant funding and income from Council tax and business rates has also helped to set a balanced budget for 2014-15. After that, however, unless our funding position changes we will need to start making the additional savings needed from front-line services.

Preparing the Community Risk Management Plan

To help to make savings in a way that has the least overall impact on the Service and our communities, during the year the Service prepared a review of risks and resources across the two counties and considered how best to make changes to our fire cover arrangements. This work was presented in the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which was opened to public consultation in October 2013. The CRMP is the overall strategic plan that looks ahead to 2020 and sets out the broad areas that the Service will be involved in in the coming years. It reviews how risk is changing over time, including both fire and rescue risks and financial risks and resources, and plans the Service's activities in the light of these changes. The review of fire and emergency cover was included in the CRMP, because of the need to make changes to the ways in which we deliver our frontline response services. It had three sets of proposals to reduce fire cover through reductions in firefighter numbers, the removal of fire engines and, potentially, the closure of some fire stations. The response to the consultation on the CRMP was understandable, with most people fearing the potential loss of services in their local areas. A recommended course of action was presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority in February 2014, with the final decision on if the changes are to be introduced later in the year. All details can be found on the Service's website or by referring to the documents and reports highlighted in the footnotes.⁴

Responding to the Winter Flooding

Early 2014 saw both Herefordshire and Worcestershire face a prolonged period of high rainfall and flooding affecting the rivers and road network. The River Severn topped the high levels which were witnessed in 2007, with February 2014 being declared one of the wettest periods since records began. The Fire and Rescue Service stepped up to the challenge to assist those communities affected by flooding. Over eleven days in the middle of February, fire and rescue crews attended 54 incidents directly related to the poor weather conditions. Rescue boats were used 15 times in this period and around 60 people were rescued during the floods. The busiest period for the Service was in the early evening of Wednesday 12 February, when 17 fire engines and emergency appliances were in use at the same time.

³ The details of the Authority's financial situation have been fully documented, notably through reports to the Fire and Rescue Authority and its committees, and summarised in the draft Community Risk Management Plan considered by the Authority at their meetings in October 2013 and February 2014.

⁴ [Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service website](#) link.

The Service played a major role in Tactical Coordinating Groups (Silver) and also a Strategic Coordinating Group (Gold), which were set up to oversee the multi-agency response to the severe weather and flooding. At the national level, the Service was involved in some of the largest deployments of fire and rescue services ever made, most notably in Somerset, the Thames Valley and Surrey. The Service's High Volume Pump crews formed part of this national response and worked in Somerset and Surrey to move large volumes of water away from affected properties.

Although the floodwater did exceed the levels seen in 2007, the Service was able to draw on the many lessons learned from the events of 2007. Since then there has been a lot of preparation for such events, including working within the communities most at risk of flooding to ensure that they were better prepared in the event of a flood. By way of comparison, during the floods of 2007 the Service received over 1,600 calls and was involved in close to 1,200 rescues.

River Severn at Worcester



River Severn at Upton



Responding to Industrial Action

Another challenge during the year was the successful implementation of the Service's industrial action Business Continuity Plan in response to the on-going pension's dispute between the Fire Brigades Union and the Government. The Service's response to several periods of industrial action demonstrated and tested the robustness of its Business Continuity Plan. Mechanisms used during industrial action, such as the use of alternative sites, have also improved the Service's general resilience against other potential disruptions to services. For instance, alternative sites could also be used if there was a fire or loss of access to a Fire Station.

Other Significant Initiatives and Events During 2013-14

USAR/Droitwich Fire Station Merger

The Service completed the consolidation of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team into Droitwich fire station creating a single highly efficient multifunctional operational unit. With the backing of management and staff, the merger has enabled working practices to be realigned, with innovative and flexible working, and has incorporated the delivery of technical response support and training around the Service, enhancing overall operational resilience within existing budgets. One of the great benefits of the merger is that it builds further resilience into the USAR provision and adds value to the mainstream activities within the Service. Further technical training and support will include operational response, incident support and USAR response capabilities as well as an additional specialist rescue boat team and rope rescue team. The merger involved the reduction of staff numbers through standard retirement, job leavers and other voluntary changes, and should begin to achieve savings of around £300,000 in the next year.

Collaborative Working with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (Project Arrow)

In December 2013, the Fire Authority gave its approval for officers to investigate whether further collaboration between the Service and Warwickshire FRS would be beneficial in providing a more sustainable and economically viable future for both Services. A project team of managers from both Services was set up to look at how collaborative working might present both Services with opportunities to become more financially and operationally efficient, while maintaining robust and resilient services and also achieving financial savings given the foreseeable budget gaps in the future. A series of facilitated workshops were held during the spring of 2014 to examine the opportunities and potential issues in greater detail, and a full report on options is to be presented to the Authority in late 2014.

Day Crewing Plus at Bromsgrove Fire Station

A new crewing system known as Day Crewing Plus (DCP) has been developed and introduced at Bromsgrove in conjunction with the opening of the new joint Police and Fire Station in April 2014. Over the last two years a working group of managers, officers and other staff including union representatives have developed this innovative new crewing model to replace the previous wholetime system. While the new model still involves wholetime firefighters, it requires fewer staff, is expected to achieve annual savings of around £415,000 on full implementation, and yet still provides an excellent response service across the Bromsgrove area. Crews operate a wholetime service during the day, and manage their availability locally to ensure that there are normally at least five firefighters ready to take a fire engine out within 90 seconds of an incident alert. At night, when there are usually fewer incidents reported, they operate a local on-call service from the fire station.



Improving our Fire Stations

Over the year, there has been considerable work to replace or renovate some of our fire stations that were no longer adequate for delivering a modern fire and emergency service. Major building work took place in Bromsgrove and Malvern; planning permission for a replacement fire station in Worcester was granted; and negotiations are underway with both Herefordshire Council and Wychavon District Council planners to explore potential new sites for Hereford and Evesham fire stations. The main developments in these initiatives are noted below:

Bromsgrove	The brand new joint Police and Fire Station was completed during the year and moved in on 3 April 2014. The accommodation and facilities at the station are of a very high quality and are ideally suited to the new Day Crewing Plus working arrangements. It also has the added value of police officers and firefighters sharing the same site, helping to consolidate the quality of emergency services provided for our communities.
Malvern	The remodelled fire station at its current site on Worcester Road is nearing completion. All building works are practically complete, ready for the Malvern firefighters to move back in from their temporary accommodation at Betony Road towards the end of June 2014.
Worcester	Plans to replace the ageing fire station in Copenhagen Street with a new, high quality, modern fire station were announced in June 2013. A new location in Sheriff Street, Worcester was selected following extensive risk mapping to ensure that the location was suitable for the Service's busiest fire station. The new station will have five bays, offices, lecture facilities and a training yard and building, including provision for the Young Firefighters Association. Once the new fire station is fully operational, the Service will sell the Copenhagen Street site to maximise capital receipts. Building work on the new fire station has started and should be completed in early 2015
Hereford	During the past 12 months, officers worked with Herefordshire Council officers to find a suitable site to replace the ageing Hereford fire station. A new site has been identified, and site plans and building elevations have been drawn up in readiness for submitting a formal planning application in the summer 2014.
Evesham	Property officers are exploring the potential to replace the current fire station. This potential project is still at a very early stage with a significant amount of investigate work necessary to examine its overall viability and feasibility. A number of designs have been completed and early discussions have taken place with Wychavon District Council planners. It will be towards the end of summer 2014 before decisions can be made on whether or not to progress this project.

Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station



Remodelled Malvern Fire Station



Proposed new Worcester Fire Station



Supporting JESIP

JESIP is the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme, and is the largest and most ambitious joint training programme ever undertaken by the three emergency services. The Service is actively involved in this two year programme and has participated in training exercises to test and improve how the Police, Ambulance and Fire and Rescue Services work together on scene in the early stages of their response to major incidents. The exercises help to improve joint working by developing a clearer understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of those in command at major incidents, and develops structured methods of joint decision making. The photograph on page 27 show's a validation exercise, organised by the Service, which involved a light aircraft crash resulting in a major road traffic collision involving a number of heavy goods vehicles and cars. This exercise took place in March 2014 and demonstrated effective joint working at a major incident.

JESIP exercise with Emergency Services working together



Source: West Midlands Fire Service

Strategic Training Facilities 'Go Live'

The Service's third Strategic Training Facility (STF) in Kidderminster went live in December 2013, just three months after the Peterchurch facility. The Evesham STF was operational in July 2013. The facility at Kidderminster (pictured below) provides varied LPG fuelled fire scenarios with burn rooms over two floors and adaptable layouts allowing multiple configurations to avoid familiarity. Along with other training facilities at Defford near Pershore, the STFs provide a range of building designs and training scenarios in local areas across the Service. This allows firefighting crews to gain hands-on experience in a range of simulated environments from cold smoke, heat and fire as well as scenarios involving ladders, ropes and aerial platforms, working at height and in basements, sewers, tunnels and confined spaces, plus Urban Search and Rescue exercises and Road Traffic Collision training. The facilities also incorporate particular hazards to firefighters, such as entanglement in wiring and vertical shafts.



Training for Rescues Involving Vehicles in Water

Eight water rescue instructors from the Service completed the Rescues from Vehicles in Water training course at the Cardiff International White Water Centre in 2013. The training venue provided an excellent opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the complex issues associated with this type of rescue scenario, expanding their level of knowledge and ultimately improving firefighter safety when attending water related incidents.

These instructors are now able to deliver this training to both water rescue and water first responder crews throughout the Service, and it will be incorporated into the three-yearly refresher programme for water rescue training.



Among other training courses carried out in 2013-14 were:

Tactical Ventilation: Initial courses were run at the Peterchurch Strategic Training Facility. These courses involve firefighters using portable fans to control the direction of heat, smoke and gases in building fires so that there are improved conditions for firefighters and anyone in need of rescue. The course will 'go live' across the Service in the autumn of 2014.

Incident Command Development: A new simulation programme called XVR was introduced during the year to replace older software. This new resource allows simulated command exposure to all hazard scenarios. It can be used at fire stations using a mobile, laptop based set up, or in the new Incident Command suite established at the Training and Development Centre in Droitwich. The suite has two 'pods' to enable different sectors of an incident to be run simultaneously, and activities carried out can be recorded for training, debrief and assessment. The suite also enables role play by those under Command development with the participation of others such as members of the public at the scene of an incident, premises owners, police officers and paramedics. This allows developing Commanders to gain decision making experience at a variety of emergency scenarios such as fires, road traffic collisions and water incidents, and helps to supplement exposure through real-life incidents.



Fire in railway station

Progressing Fire Control with Shropshire FRS

Over the year, we have continued to develop the shared Fire Control centre with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. Fire Control is the centre that receives 999 calls and officers there make sure that the most appropriate fire engines are mobilised to incidents. This is a major collaboration between the two Services and it has already started to realise benefits, with technological improvements, greater resilience and increased capacity, as well as opportunities for significant savings. During the year, both Service's purchased and installed 'Command & Control' mobilising systems, which will have the capability of being operated from both



Worcester and Shrewsbury. New operational policy and procedures have also been introduced, in conjunction with a wider Collaborative Partnership of 21 Fire and Rescue Authorities, which will ensure that all Services have common standards and operational procedures with standardised training packages and mobilising protocols. This will be of great benefit in terms of resilience for Fire Control, especially in times of spare conditions and other emergencies, such as heavy snow or if Service buildings are out of action.

A review of staffing within Fire Control considered possible alternatives to the current control room structure, taking into account the reduction in call volume, peaks in activity levels and the improving efficiency of current working practices. As a result there has been a reduction in the number of posts which, together with the implementation of flexible rostering for control staff, has enabled efficiency savings to be made.

Delivering Two New Ultra Heavy Rescue Appliances

2013 saw the Service upgrade two fire engines so that they can provide 'Ultra Heavy Rescue' support for fire and rescue crews. The new vehicles, which are based at Droitwich and Hereford fire stations, have advanced state-of-the-art equipment on board able to help to lift, cut or move heavy or large vehicles. This means that firefighters are now better equipped than ever before to deal with serious road traffic collisions. Previously, there was only one heavy rescue response vehicle based at Droitwich, which meant a significant amount of time could be lost if it was needed in an incident in another area.

The remaining heavy rescue equipment has been used to upgrade fire engines at Leintwardine and Ewyas Harold. This greatly improves the Service's capability to respond to road traffic collisions with the best possible equipment in the more remote areas of the two counties. In addition, there is also an Incident Support Vehicle at Droitwich fire station, which further increases support for firefighters attending the more serious traffic accidents as it carries extra equipment and welfare facilities.



Enhancing Animal Rescue Capabilities

The Service has successfully implemented the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) model for the management of incidents involving the rescue of large animals such as horses and cattle. Crews across the Service have received the latest training and tactics on dealing with such incidents as first on scene. Two specialist teams in Bromyard and Pershore have also received a higher level of training and equipment so that they can assist with resolving the more complex large animal rescue incidents. With this now in place across the whole Service, there is greater capability of resolving incidents as safely and quickly as possible, and ensuring a high level of animal welfare during rescues. In 2013-14, the Service attended 103 animal assistance incidents compared with 93 in the previous year. Since becoming operational in September 2013, the two specialist teams attended 11 complex incidents, where the new equipment and training was put into practice.



Carrying Out Local Risk and District Exercises

The range of types of emergencies that the Service attends has changed significantly since the Home Office produced the first 'Manuals of Firemanship' in the 1940's. For example, we now have a statutory responsibility to attend road traffic accidents where people need rescuing. To make sure that we are as prepared as we can be, we continue to provide training and development programmes. This helps to ensure that firefighters have the necessary firefighting and rescue skills to match the complexity of the incidents attended. This also



ensures a firm commitment to the Core Strategy aim of "ensuring firefighter safety." Complementing this is a comprehensive programme of both Local Risk and larger scale District Exercises, which take place throughout each year. In 2013-14, there were 36 Local Risk exercises and 6 District level exercises, and the programme included exercises such as a simulated M5 motorway crash involving casualties, a search and rescue scenario in a storage warehouse fire, and a wildfire exercise in Wyre Forest.

Aerial Appliance Review

A review of the provision of aerial appliances across the Service was carried out in March 2013. It looked at known risk premises, incident profiles and the locations of aerial appliances in other Services and considered data from April 2009 to March 2013. Following the review the aerial appliance was removed from Bromsgrove fire station while the Aerial Ladder Platforms at Hereford and Worcester fire stations have been retained. Further aerial appliance resilience is provided by Gloucestershire, Mid and West Wales, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services.

Enforcing Fire Safety

In January 2014 the Service successfully carried out a significant prosecution under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The prosecution against the owner of an independent school was heard at Worcester Crown Court, and the owner was found guilty of serious breaches in fire safety law, leading to a £24,000 fine and payment of the Service's prosecution costs. Our Technical Fire Safety inspectors had found serious deficiencies at the premises, including defective smoke alarms and fire doors not working in student sleeping areas. The Service continues to send out a clear message to owners, who ignore their fire safety responsibilities, that where there are such extremely serious infringements of fire safety they will be prosecuted.

£45,000 Raised by the Award-Winning FireFit Challenge.

In December 2013 the Service formally celebrated its achievements after raising £45,000 for various charities. First launched in 2011, the challenge aimed to motivate staff in their own health and fitness as well as promoting these aims within the community and supporting charities. The Service used the incentive of the London Olympics to simulate a Beijing to London triathlon to 'bring the torch home,' covering a distance of 5,250 miles in the process. Fifty separate FireFit events were held across the two counties and 174 Service employees were involved in the fundraising activities. Among the challenges were a hike across Dartmoor, half and full marathons, treks in New Zealand and Costa Rica, the Toughest Firefighter Challenge, swimathons, mud runs, dragon boat racing and a simulated Everest climb using a ladder!



Gold award winners for the Fire Service Team Award – Green Watch Hereford

Developing the Service's Social Media Presence

The Service continues to expand its online presence, specifically in social media, to help to transform the way it communicates with communities and delivers news to the general public. Social media is a powerful form of communication that allows instant responses, two-way conversations and the rapid spread of information. Not only is it interactive, it is also relatively easy to use and provides a much more personal approach to informing and updating people. Of particular note was the launch of the Fire Control Room's Twitter account in September 2013, which now maintains a regular flow of incident reports and updates for the public and local media on all noteworthy call-outs Fire Service has attended on any given day. Twitter accounts have also been established for senior officers, including the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, which is also helping to increase public awareness of the work of the Service as well as highlighting good partnership working across the two counties.



Social media sites

Partnership Working to Bring Life-Saving Equipment to Kingsland

Firefighters at Kingsland fire station worked with Kingsland Parish Council and West Midlands Ambulance Service to ensure that a life-saving defibrillator was installed in the village and made available to the public 24 hours a day. The Parish Council provided all the funding and the Ambulance Service has been training Kingsland firefighters to show local people how to use the defibrillator, which can be crucial if someone suffers a cardiac arrest.



Launching a Community Cycle Team in Redditch

In 2013 a scheme was launched in Redditch aimed at helping the Service to engage more closely with young people in the town, and help to discourage arson and other anti-social behaviour throughout school holiday periods. The scheme was partly funded by the Safer Redditch Partnership and the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, and involves local firefighters pairing up with local community safety officers riding distinctive bikes and wearing specially designed cycle kit so that they will be easily recognisable in the community. They cycle around key hot-spot areas of Redditch, acting as a visible presence, offering fire safety advice and promoting positive activities for young people to get involved in. They also look out for potential fire risks such as abandoned cars, empty buildings or fly tipping, and can alert partner agencies to help to remove or reduce the risks.



The Young Firefighter's Association (YFA)

Throughout the year, the YFA continued to engage, support and mentor young people from a wide variety of background, helping them to become responsible, self-disciplined young adults. The YFA attended many events including open days and community safety initiatives helping to spread the Service's key community safety message to vulnerable members of the community. The young people also attended an annual week-long camp, which was held in the Forest of Dean, and plans are already in place for this year's camp which will be held in August 2014 in Somerset.



Reviewing Operational Logistics

A review of the Fleet and Equipment department based at Operational Logistics centre in Betony Road, Malvern was undertaken in 2013-14. This site deals with the procurement and maintenance of the Service's extensive range of vehicles and equipment, providing cost effective, high quality products, which enable staff to conduct their roles effectively. The findings of the review concluded that improvements could be made to the management structures on site, saving money now and also reporting that additional savings could be made by maintaining certain items of equipment in-house rather than sending them to an outside contractor. Once implemented a revised structure at our Operational Logistics site will continue to ensure that the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire will benefit from the very best vehicles and equipment.

Throughout the year, the Service ensured that all vehicles and equipment were rigorously tested and maintained. This helps to both extend the life of the fleet and equipment and also makes sure that everything continues to be as reliable and as safe as possible. Work on buying new fire engines was held back during the year in the light of the on-going review of fire cover as part of the Community Risk Management Plan.

New dark blue work wear for all operational staff was also introduced in the year, giving the Service a strong and professional identity, easily recognised within the local community. The new work wear was introduced within the existing uniform budget.



Supporting the Service from the 'Back Office'

Corporate Services: Over the year, the Department prepared the Community Risk Management Plan, which sets out how services will be delivered up to 2020 in the light of changing risks and resources. It incorporated a review of fire cover, which looks at how best to organise available resources across the two counties. It was accompanied by an extensive public consultation programme, which has helped to inform decisions about the future. Implementation of the Plan will take place over the next six years to 2020.

Human Resources: A new pension's auto-enrolment was introduced along with all the necessary procedures to make sure that employees are automatically enrolled into the right pension scheme at the right time. Succession planning information was extended so that potential retirements up to 2023 can now be identified. The recruitment drive for on-call firefighters also continued apace, targeting hard to reach areas and those where it is proving difficult to recruit. All fire stations now have individual recruitment plans and there are better links with the Chamber of Commerce, employers and schools.

Assessment and Development: The department has continued to support workforce planning to ensure that core skills and competencies are developed and maintained, along with promotion career advancement and development paths for all operational staff.

Staff Health, Wellbeing and Fitness: Testing during the year showed an overall improvement in the fitness of our operational staff. This is supported by increased access to health and wellbeing information and guidance and a range of practical fitness activities including gym training sessions and improved occupational health services. All fire stations were also provided with training equipment during the year. At the same time, there has been a reduction in the level of sickness absence, which is now the lowest in the last five years.



Staff participating in a fund raising health challenge

Business Continuity and Emergency Planning: Over last year, there were a number of developments and improvements in the Service's Business Continuity and Emergency Planning function. One example of this was the successful delivery of the Service's industrial action Business Continuity Plan in response to the on-going pension dispute, which helped to test and demonstrate the robustness of the Plan. Mechanisms used during the industrial action, such as the use of alternative sites, has also improved the Service's general resilience. Alternative sites could also be used, for example, if there was a fire or loss of access to a Fire Station. There was also improved engagement with Risk Management throughout the organisation, and Risk Registers (including Strategic Risk Registers) are now reviewed quarterly at Middle Management Board and Senior Management Board. Risk Registers set out the main risks that might affect the Service and our plans for dealing with them should they happen. The results of an internal audit also showed that the Service has significant assurance in both areas of Business Continuity and Risk Management.

Auditing Operational Assurance

Auditing our operational activities helps to ensure that they are working effectively, efficiently and safely, and that there are high standards of management and sustainable high quality firefighting and rescue services on the ground. An internal audit of Operational Assurance was completed in October 2013 and covered areas such as operational policies, training, risk information, incident monitoring, debriefs and operational health and safety. It found many examples of effective systems and working practices in place, and the audit recommendations will be built on during 2014-15.

A further audit of health and safety was carried out in November 2013 to ensure that the Service meets high standards of health, safety and welfare in the operational environment. It found that there was a well-embedded health and safety culture within the Service and that there was a strong management commitment to ensuring health and safety. The recommendations will be implemented during 2014-15.

Our Work to be Completed in 2014-15

Key Service Priorities and Objectives 2013-2020

In preparing the Community Risk Management Plan to guide service delivery over the course of this decade, each Directorate identified key priorities and headline objectives for action up to 2020. The following chart provides a summary.

Service Support	Service Delivery	Finance & Assets
Human Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Planning • Staff Wellbeing • Conditions of Service 	Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability • Training and Competence • Intelligence 	Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Accounting • Budget Setting • Budget Monitoring • Creditor Payment and Income Collection • Capital Programme
Operational Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilising Control • Health and Safety • Fleet and Equipment • Operational Guidance 	Community Risk and Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Community Risk - four key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – accidental fire deaths and injuries – arson – vulnerable and elderly – road safety 	Asset Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Projects • Property • ICT • Procurement
Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRMP • Operational Assurance • Partnership Working • Corporate Communications 		Legal Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services and Monitoring Officer • Committee & Member Services.

Actions and initiatives to support these objectives in 2014-15 are set out below using the four main headings described in the CRMP: prevention, protection, response and resilience.

Prevention	is about delivering activities that aim to stop incidents happening in the first place. Much of this work is organised through our Community Safety teams and delivered locally by firefighters, frontline support staff and volunteers.
Protection	is about making sure that business premises are as safe as possible, including carrying out inspections and enforcing fire safety measures where required. This work is undertaken by specialist technical fire safety officers.
Response	is about being able to act quickly, effectively and efficiently in the event of a fire and rescue emergency. This is highly specialised work that is carried out by well-trained and well-equipped firefighters.
Resilience	is about being as prepared as possible for whatever emergency might happen and being able to provide timely back up support at incidents. This requires us to have contingency plans in place with others for both nationally significant emergencies as well as local incidents, including making sure that we can continue to deliver our own services, especially at times of emergency

Prevention

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place is the most effective way to save lives. We will continue to develop our understanding of risk to improve our ability to target areas and people most at risk.

Over the year the Community Fire Safety department will continue work on ensuring that it uses its resources effectively. It will focus on reducing the three main risk areas: accidental dwelling fires, deliberate fires and road traffic collisions, and work will be directed towards those most vulnerable and susceptible to these risks.

The Service's education programme in school will also be evaluated to assess its contribution to reducing the number and severity of fires in the home. Education work is being targeted to known challenging groups, such as those attending exclusion units through the Ignite project. Education is also now aimed towards older people, covering the specific risks of fire affecting older people and encouraging people to help to identify other vulnerable people in their community.

Strong relationships with partner agencies will continue to be developed using agreements. This is helping to gain firm commitments to working together to reduce accidental fires as well as assisting other organisations in meeting their particular responsibilities to the community. Partnership agreements and volunteering strategies will also be strengthened to ensure that there is a consistent and proactive approach to community risk across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This work is being targeted towards the four community safety key themes: accidental fire deaths and injuries, arson, vulnerable and elderly groups and road safety.

Work to bring together the Community Safety and Technical Fire Safety departments will be completed in 2014-15. This will create a single Community Risk team embedding both functions. The merged team will provide departmental resilience by enhancing team skills and by providing additional efficiencies. Other advantages of the merger will be a combined approach to tackling risk linking both community and business risk, and combining strategies and joint targeting where appropriate.

Protection

Protection work carried out through the Technical Fire Safety team significantly reduces the risk of fire in buildings where people work, shop and visit. The team works with businesses across the two counties to ensure that they have appropriate fire safety precautions in place, including ways of preventing and restricting the spread of fire, and having means of escape in case of fire.

By the end of December 2014, all wholtime firefighters will have been trained so that they can carry out simple regulatory fire safety checks on business premises. The Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC) is a practical inspection which involves checking the adequacy of measures to protect people in case of fire such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, protection of escape routes and staff training. At the same time, crews check for any significant, previously unknown risks to firefighters, the community and the environment. To date checks have been made at over 90 industrial and commercial premises, and the aim is to complete at least 300 BFSCs this year. These inspections will be targeted at small and medium sized industrial premises. Other checks will be carried out in premises such as residential care homes, licensed premises and other large places of assembly. This work adds another dimension to the role of the firefighters at no additional cost to the Service.

Along with the BFSC process, the training for crews includes knowledge to support tactical planning at building fires, specifically the effect of building structure on the spread of fire and the different models for emergency evacuation at hospitals, care homes and multi-storey blocks of flats. Additional training in the most risk critical areas of technical fire safety knowledge is also planned for delivery to all on-call crews by the end of the year.

This approach will also help to enhance the department's assessment of risk, and the gathered data will inform operational intelligence which will help to reduce risk posed to firefighters at operational incidents.

Response

The review of fire and emergency response arrangement carried out as part of the new Community Risk Management Plan found that we can reduce the number of fire engines and firefighters and still maintain an effective response service. However, firefighters will always represent the largest part of our workforce and their safety is of paramount importance. To support this, the Service continues to invest in training and development programmes designed to ensure that firefighters have the necessary skills and technical knowledge needed to carry out their many roles effectively and safely.

Over the year, training programmes will continue to cover such areas as Tactical Ventilation, Incident Command and further utilisation of the Strategic Training Facilities. Tactical Ventilation Training, which started initial courses in 2013, will be completed for all wholetime operational personnel. The anticipated start date for this is currently September 2014, and phase two of the training will include an awareness package for on-call crews to increase their understanding of the processes involved, the operation of powered fans and external vent safety cover. This will help on-call crews to support wholetime crews involved in tactical ventilation at incidents. A further practical phase for on-call crews is currently planned for later years.

This year there will also be a refresher programme focusing on road traffic collisions (RTCs), which will incorporate the recent implementation of the new Ultra Heavy Rescue Pumps, incidents involving alternatively fuelled Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, incidents involving farm vehicles and livestock carriers, and firefighter welfare issues arising from the cumulative effects of exposure to traumatic incidents.

During the year improvements will be made to the Service's Debrief System, which analyses how incidents were dealt with to learn lessons for the future. An online reporting tool will be created, which will help to identify trends and will provide an immediate link to supporting Health and Safety. Outcomes will provide evidence to support changes to future operational response and will influence areas such as policies, training, equipment and operational intelligence. As well as supporting the safety of both firefighters and members of our communities, this system will also help us to share debrief information with partner agencies, which will help to improve the coordination of our operational response to incidents involving other blue light services.

The Operational Policy Department will rationalise the current process for policy development and review during 2014-15. This will be achieved using an in-house software platform, and will increase the efficiency and management for Service policy documentation across all departments.

The 'Intel Process' will be improved further throughout the year. This is the process of gathering intelligence (or information) on hazards and risks associated with different types of premises, such as industrial plants, heritage sites, hospitals and schools, and making it available in an electronic format on fire engines to help to ensure firefighter safety in the event of a fire or other emergency incident at these buildings and sites. Following guidance on Operational Risk Information issued by Government in 2012, a gap analysis was carried out during 2013. In 2014-15 the Operational Policy Department will identify and introduce new software to help to improve overall efficiency.

The recommendations of the review of Health and Safety reporting systems, which reported in February 2013, are scheduled for implementation during the year. Improvements will include the introduction of electronic systems for health and safety reporting and for Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) registers at fire stations. This will help to simplify reporting arrangement and improve our overall response to Health and Safety issues.

Resilience

Like other fire and rescue services, the Service ensures that it has plans and arrangements in place to deal with the many types of incidents it might face, however they are caused – naturally, by accident or by intentional acts. The Service will continue to work with partners through the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum to ensure that there is good regional coordination in the event of major emergencies and to prepare and maintain a local Community Risk Register. The Service will also continue to maintain and update its own Business Continuity Plans to prepare for any significant events that might adversely affect the ability to deliver its frontline and back office services.

This year, new Business Continuity Plans will be prepared for the new fire stations at Malvern and Bromsgrove. There will also be a review of the Service's response to flooding against current business continuity and emergency planning procedures. A further review will look at the Local Resilience Forum Risk Registers and how the Service engages with them.

Operational Assurance to be Completed 2014-15

The Operational Assurance audit in October 2013 identified 'Active Incident Monitoring' as the highest priority for action.

In response to this, a web-based Active Incident Monitoring system has been created, which will be introduced in 2014. The system will enable managers to monitor the performance of Incident Commanders at operational incident against specific national occupational standards set for their role. The system supports the Service's commitment to meeting its health and safety responsibilities and is designed to improve firefighter and community safety whilst providing evidence of the delivery of quality services to our communities. In addition, this system will also promote personal development by creating direct links with incident command assessments, training, exercises and workplace assessment programmes.

Other areas of work to be completed in 2014-15 include:

- Introducing of a new system to streamline and standardise the production and issue of Service policies.
- Aligning Breathing Apparatus procedures to new national guidance.
- Carrying out an audit of our current operational debrief system.
- Aligning operational risk information to new national guidance and increasing training and exercises around our biggest risks.
- Carrying out an audit of operational training record reports.
- Prioritising and undertaking thematic reviews as identified by the Senior Management Board.

Other initiatives planned include:

- In addition to the programme of new and refurbished Fire Stations, there has been further work with partners in Worcestershire to develop plans for creating a single, publicly owned company for managing and delivering property services across the region. When in place, the model, called a Joint Property Vehicle, will aim to create a more seamless estates service for communities while also achieving significant savings,
- A restructured Property team will continue to provide improve resilience and support,
- Following the review of ICT services during 2013, proposals to provide a more responsive and resilient service to directly support Fire Control will be implemented during 2014, and
- A national procurement database will be introduced during 2014, which will enable greater access to information relating to partner organisations' key procurement activities. This will help to highlight opportunities for further economies of scale.

Resourcing the Future - Financial Information

This section shows what the Authority spends and breaks this down into the on-going running costs and major capital investments.

Summary of our workforce		What the Service costs in 2014-15	
As at the end of March 2014			Budget £m
Wholetime Firefighters	43%	Employees	21.2
On-Call Firefighters	39%	Running Costs	4.5
Support Staff	15%	Fleet, Equipment, IT, Property	4.5
Fire Control Staff	3%	Capital Financing	2.4
Total number of employees (FTE)	693	Total	32.6

(FTE = full time equivalent)

Summary of our resources		How the Service is paid for	
As at the end of March 2014			£m
27 fire stations		Council tax	19.4
43 frontline fire engines		Business rates	2.5
28 specialist vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles and boats		Revenue Support Grant	9.4
Training and Development Centre		Special Grants	1.3
Strategic Training Facilities			
Fire Service Headquarters		Total	32.6

Mobilising Centre/Fire Control

Operational Logistics Centre

Urban Search and Rescue facility

The cost of the Fire and Rescue Service to the average household in Herefordshire and Worcester (Council Tax Band D) is **£75.06**

In common with other public services, the Fire and Rescue Service continues to face additional major cuts in funding over the next few years, which will result in considerable changes in the way the Service is provided. It is likely, therefore, that the cost of the Service will reduce significantly over this period.

Capital investment in 2014-15

The table below provides details of the Authority's estimated investment in major capital schemes such as major building works and purchase of fire engines. Unlike revenue expenditure, this is funded through borrowing, with only a small proportion funded through central government grants.

	£m
Fire Stations / Training Facilities	5.8
Vehicles and Equipment	0.6
ICT / Communications System / Minor Building works	0.6
Total	7.0



What do you think of our Annual Report?

We welcome any views that you have on the content of this Annual Report or the way in which Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority delivers its services.

If you have any comments or would like to contact us about any issue, please visit our website at www.hwfire.org.uk where you will find full contact details along with links to further information about our services and activities.

If you have any general enquiries, please call 0845 122 4454 or email us at info@hwfire.org.uk

You can also follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/hwfire> or find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/hwfire>

Alternatively you may write to:

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
2 Kings Court,
Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester
WR5 1JR

If you would like this information in an alternative language or format such as large print or audio, please contact us on 0845 122 4454.

Your Right to Know - Access to Information

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service collects and maintains information and data to enable us to carry out our statutory duties. A great deal of information on the Service is already available in the public domain through our Publication Scheme and [Transparency Webpage](#). Service staff will help you to obtain the information you want unless disclosure would be against the law. You have a right to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which gives you a general right of access to recorded information held by the Service. The Act is designed to ensure greater accountability, as well as to promote a more open culture. If you want to know what personal information is held about you, you can make a request under the Data Protection Act 1998. To find out more, please follow the link: [Your Right to Know](#)