



Hereford & Worcester
Fire Authority

Fire Authority Annual Report

2015-16

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Foreword

We are pleased to present the Fire Authority Annual Report for 2015-16. In this report you'll find a review of what we did last year, including our overall performance and some of our main achievements. You'll also see what we're planning to do this year.

As with most other public services, the last year has again been dominated by the ongoing funding issues facing the Authority. Up until last year, we'd already saved more than £4 million year-on-year since 2010-11, but we still needed to find a further £2.1 million by 2016-17. A major step towards tackling this was the approval in October last year of the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 and its fire and emergency cover changes. The savings from the crewing changes at fire stations and the removal of two fire engines, combined with further reductions in management, support staff and spending budgets, mean we have managed to make savings totalling £6.4 million by 2015-16.

We know the funding issues aren't going to go away anytime soon and we estimate we'll need to find a further £3.3 million by 2019-20. To prepare for this, we've been making further plans to

tackle issues beyond 2016-17. We've called this the 2020 Vision Programme, which promises to herald a fundamental transformation in the way we'll be delivering our services in the future. You can read more about this later in the report.

Despite the funding issues, we've made some excellent progress in many areas: the overall trend in incident numbers continue to fall with last year's 6,112 incidents the lowest we've ever recorded; we started work on the Worcester Fire Station, which is now complete, and had official openings for Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station and the rebuilt and modernised Malvern Fire Station; we've taken part in major training exercises, including coordinating one of the largest multi-service emergency events we've ever held; and we've won more than £4.2 million funding from the Government to support two key projects in our 2020 Vision Programme.

We've also successfully maintained our frontline firefighting and rescue response service through 39 separate periods of industrial action arising from the long-running pensions dispute between the Fire Brigades Union and the Government without any noticeable impact on the public.

Finally, we completed a thorough overhaul of the Service's website to make it as interactive and accessible as possible.

As always, none of this would be possible without the commitment and integrity of our staff, the ongoing professional working relationships with our partner organisations, and the understanding and trust of our communities. Times continue to be tough, but with the continued support and involvement of our staff, our partners and our communities, we believe we will get through the challenges ahead.

This annual report paints an overall picture of our performance in 2014-15, our achievements and challenges, and our plans for 2015-16. To get a broader understanding of the full range of work we're involved in, we recommend you look through our reports to the Authority and its Committees, all of which are available on the [Service website](#).

Finally, we always welcome your comments and thoughts on the report. There are many ways you can do this, all of which are detailed at the end of the report.



Cllr. Derek W. Prodger MBE,
Chairman of the Fire Authority



Mark J. Yates QFSM, Chief
Fire Officer/Chief Executive

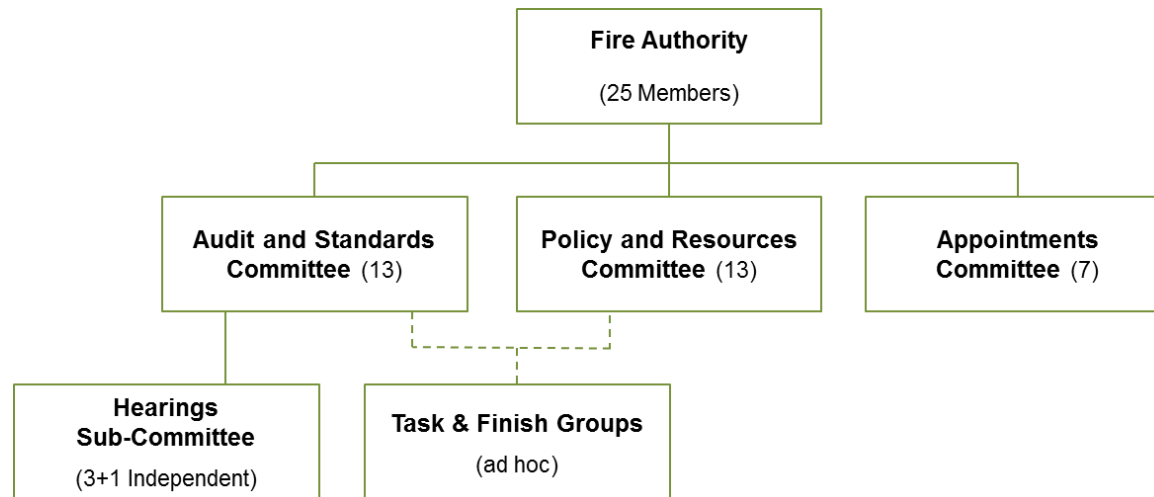
Our Authority

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority is the governing body of the Fire and Rescue Service. It's made up of 25 local councillors, six from Herefordshire Council and 19 from Worcestershire County Council. They make sure the Service carries out its duties in relation to fire prevention, fire safety, firefighting and rescues, including from road traffic collisions and other emergencies such as flooding, as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

The Authority sets the budget and approves the overall direction for the Service. It also appoints the Chief Fire Officer and makes sure the Service has the right people, equipment and training to deliver their services effectively and efficiently in the best interests of the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The Fire Authority meets four times a year and is supported by three committees as shown in the structure chart below. Meetings are usually open to the public.

Members of the Authority are also kept up to date on fire and rescue matters through an annual programme of seminars, workshops and visits to fire stations and other facilities.



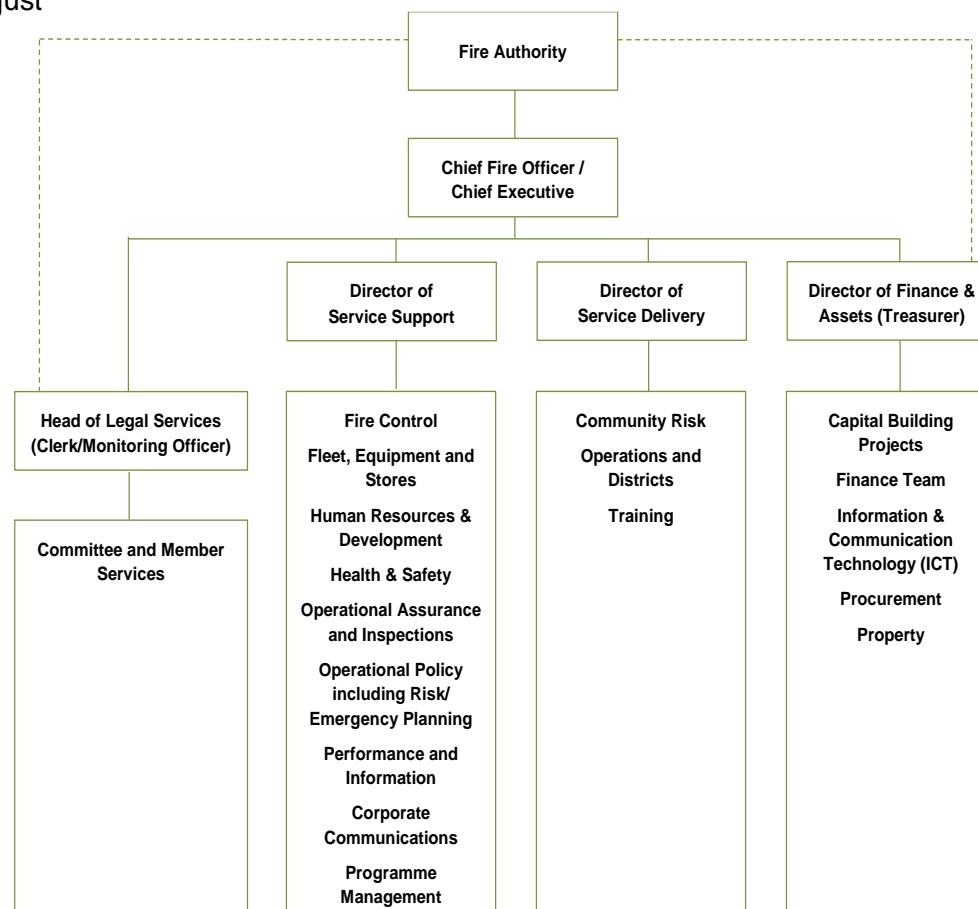
Our Service

The Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive with the support of the Senior Management Board. The Service employs just under 800 full-time and part-time staff, most of whom are highly trained firefighters (approximately 80 per cent of the total workforce).

In addition to Service Headquarters in Worcester, there are 27 fire stations across the two counties, a training centre, stores/workshops and a number of locally based training facilities.

The Service is structured into three directorates – Service Support, Service Delivery and Finance & Assets. Most staff are directly involved in providing prevention, protection, response and resilience services. These services are designed to keep the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire as safe as possible by working with local people, organisations and business to try to make sure emergency incidents don't happen in the first place, as well as by being able to respond quickly and effectively to any emergencies that do happen.

These essential services are supported by a wide range of organisational support services such as financial, personnel and legal management functions. The full range of services is shown in chart opposite.

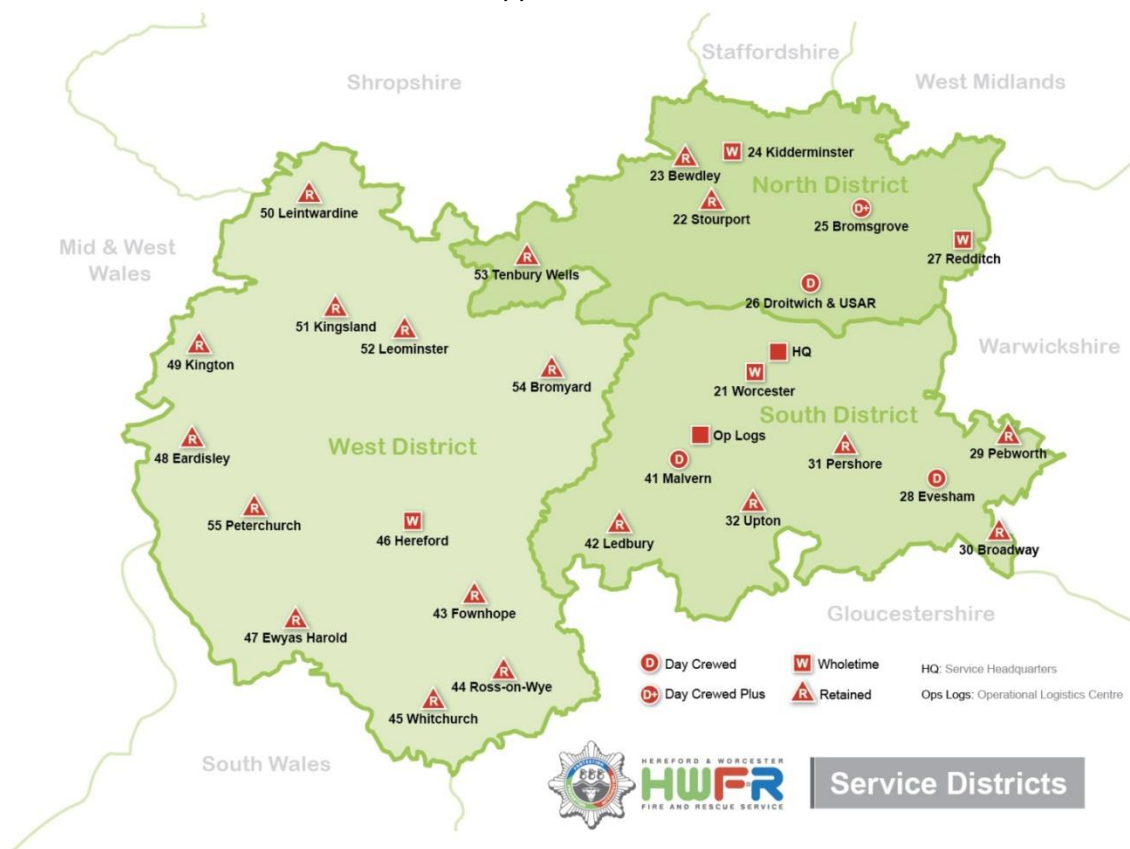


Our Districts

With an area of around 1,500 square miles (390,000 hectares) to cover, we organise our services into three Districts – North, South and West – to provide a balanced response to reducing community risk. This is supported by training services delivered at the Training Centre in Droitwich, fleet maintenance and supplies at the

Operational Logistics centre in Malvern, and the organisational support services at Service Headquarters in Worcester.

Across the three districts there are 27 [fire stations](#) and 41 [fire engines](#) strategically located to provide an appropriate response as soon as an emergency call is received. In 2014-15, we received 8,898 emergency calls for assistance at incidents ranging from property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, water and animal rescues, collapsed structures and dealing with hazardous materials. We attended 6,112 incidents, about 118 a week. This continues a general downwards trend; in 2013-14 we attended an average of 127 incidents a week.



The downward trend continues to show how communities are becoming more aware of fire safety precautions and highlights the value of community safety work carried out by the Service and its partners. However, we can never be complacent about these improvements and must always be ready for any emergency, at any time and anywhere.

The following map shows the different types of crewing and specialist vehicles at our 27 fire stations. More details on crewing and vehicles can be found in [The Fire Service](#) section of our website.

North District



North District covers north Worcestershire with the majority of people living in the main towns of Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Droitwich. Like most of Worcestershire, it has an ageing population with one in five of all residents aged over 65 years. It is a generally prosperous area though there are pockets of deprivation, notably in the built-up

areas of Kidderminster and Redditch. The rivers Severn and Stour run through the district and the M5 and M42 motorways are key features to the east.



The area is served by seven fire stations, with Redditch Fire Station being the Service's second busiest (after Worcester Fire Station). In 2014-15, there were 830 incidents within the Redditch Fire Station area, 32 per cent of all incidents in North District. The district now includes Tenbury Wells Fire Station following a review of fire station management arrangements.



South District



South District covers south Worcestershire and part of Herefordshire with the majority of people living in the city of Worcester and the main towns of Malvern and Evesham.

The city of Worcester is the largest urban area in the two counties with close to 100,000 people living there, and is the predominant employment, retail and tourism centre in Worcestershire. With an ageing population, the demand on health, housing and other public

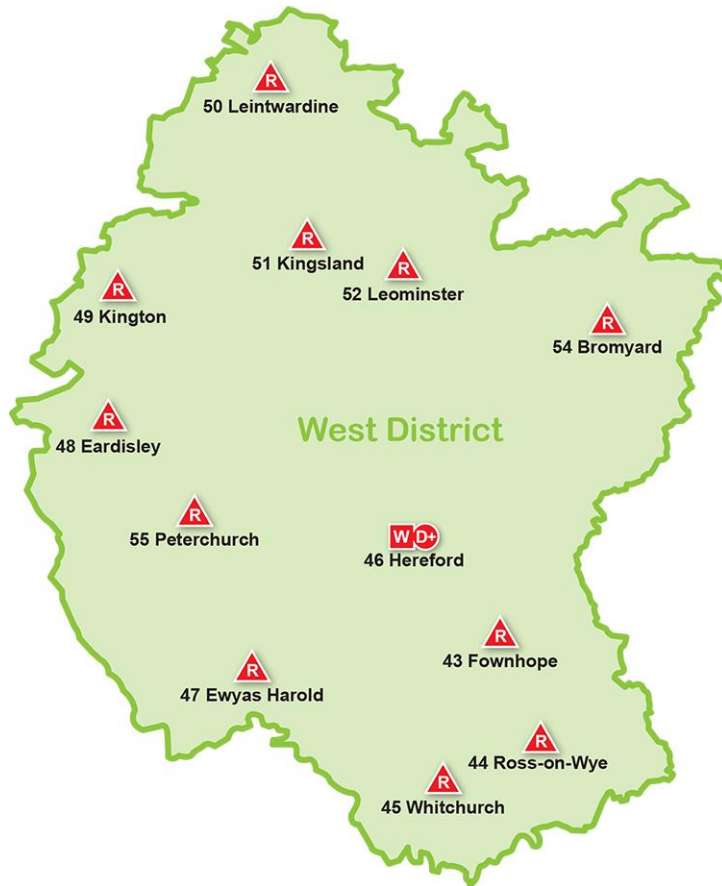
services is expected to increase over the coming years. Like the north of Worcestershire, the district is relatively prosperous, although there are some local areas – particularly in parts of Worcester –

where the quality of life is poorer in terms of employment, health, crime and educational attainment. The district has extensive areas of open countryside and farmland, including the Vale of Evesham and the Malvern Hills. The M5 motorway also passes through the district.

There are eight fire stations in the district after Ledbury Fire Station was added as part of the review of fire station management arrangements. Worcester Fire Station continues to be the Service's busiest fire station, with 1,084 incidents in the area in 2014-15, 51 per cent of all incidents in South District.



West District



West District covers the majority of Herefordshire, one of the most rural and sparsely population counties in England, with less than one person per hectare. Just over half the population lives in the city of Hereford, the county's main employment and retail centre.

With the rest of the population living in the handful of market towns and smaller villages, access to services is a particular issue with some communities in relatively remote and hard to reach locations.

The district is served by 12 fire stations located in Hereford, the main towns and smaller settlements along the border with Wales. Hereford Fire Station is the busiest Station in the district with 744 incidents in the area in 2014-15, 55 per cent of all incidents in West District.

Detailed data and statistics about the districts and their fire stations in 2014-15 are available on the Service website, if you would like more in-depth information.



Our Strategy

'Our Strategy' is the Service's overall statement of intent. With safety firmly at its heart, the statement has a clear core purpose built on strong foundations linked by three driving principles: firefighter safety, community safety and the delivery of quality services.

It relies on all parts of the Service – from frontline firefighting to support staff and community safety volunteers – working together to deliver services and plans.

The following diagram illustrates how Our Strategy brings all this together.



Our Values

The Service has developed a unique set of values, which guide all members of staff in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. They help the Service to maintain high standards in operating fairly, ensuring dignity and respect in the workplace and working in

communities, recognising individual contribution and working towards eliminating discrimination. A summary is set out below, and further information can be found in the Service's [Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct](#), available on the Service's website.

We Value Innovation, Change and Learning

- we encourage critical and lateral thinking and manage constructive challenge
- we take responsibility for improving our performance
- we develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential
- we take responsibility for our actions
- we encourage problem solving at all levels

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 always fulfil our responsibilities to people, communities and the environment
- we remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve
- we will challenge inappropriate behaviour

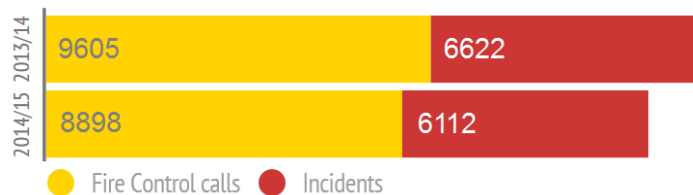
We Value Our People

- we are committed to developing our people
- we build relationships based upon mutual trust and respect
- we work in an inclusive way
- we recognise that everyone has a contribution to make
- we respect and see difference as a strength
- we behave in an ethical way

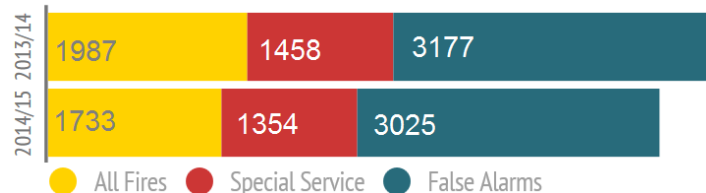
We Value Our Fire and Rescue Service

- we are passionate about maintaining/improving our great reputation
- we make work rewarding and motivating
- we all pull together in the right direction
- we are a team and not a family
- we enjoy and celebrate our work
- we focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities

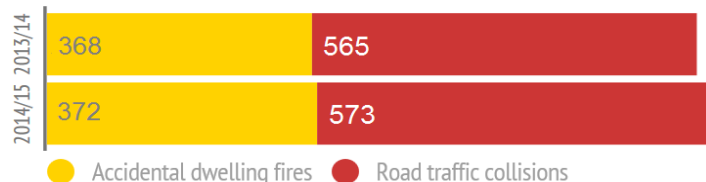
Our performance in 2014-15 at a glance



Emergency calls received and incidents attended were both down by more than seven per cent on the previous year.



We attended fewer fires, special services and false alarms than we did last year.



However, there was a small increase in the number of accidental dwelling fires and road traffic collisions.



We recorded fewer people injured at primary fire incidents attended in 2014-15, down by more than 40 per cent on the previous year, and the number of people killed fell from six to two.

The Service attended 6,112 incidents 2014-15. This continues the downward trend and is the lowest total for the nine years that data has been collected in this way. Fires are down by more than 12 per cent, 'special service' incidents by seven per cent and false alarms by almost five per cent.

There were falls in numbers in almost all the recorded incident categories, as seen in the Summary table on the next page. It should be noted, however, there were small increases in the numbers of accidental dwelling fires (four more than last year) and road traffic collisions (eight more).

Overall staff sickness levels saw a small increase to 5.96 shifts/days lost per head in 2014-15 (when compared to 5.92 in 2013-14). This still compares favourably with local partners: for example, Worcestershire County Council saw 7.17 days lost per head in 2014-15 and Herefordshire Council 9.71.

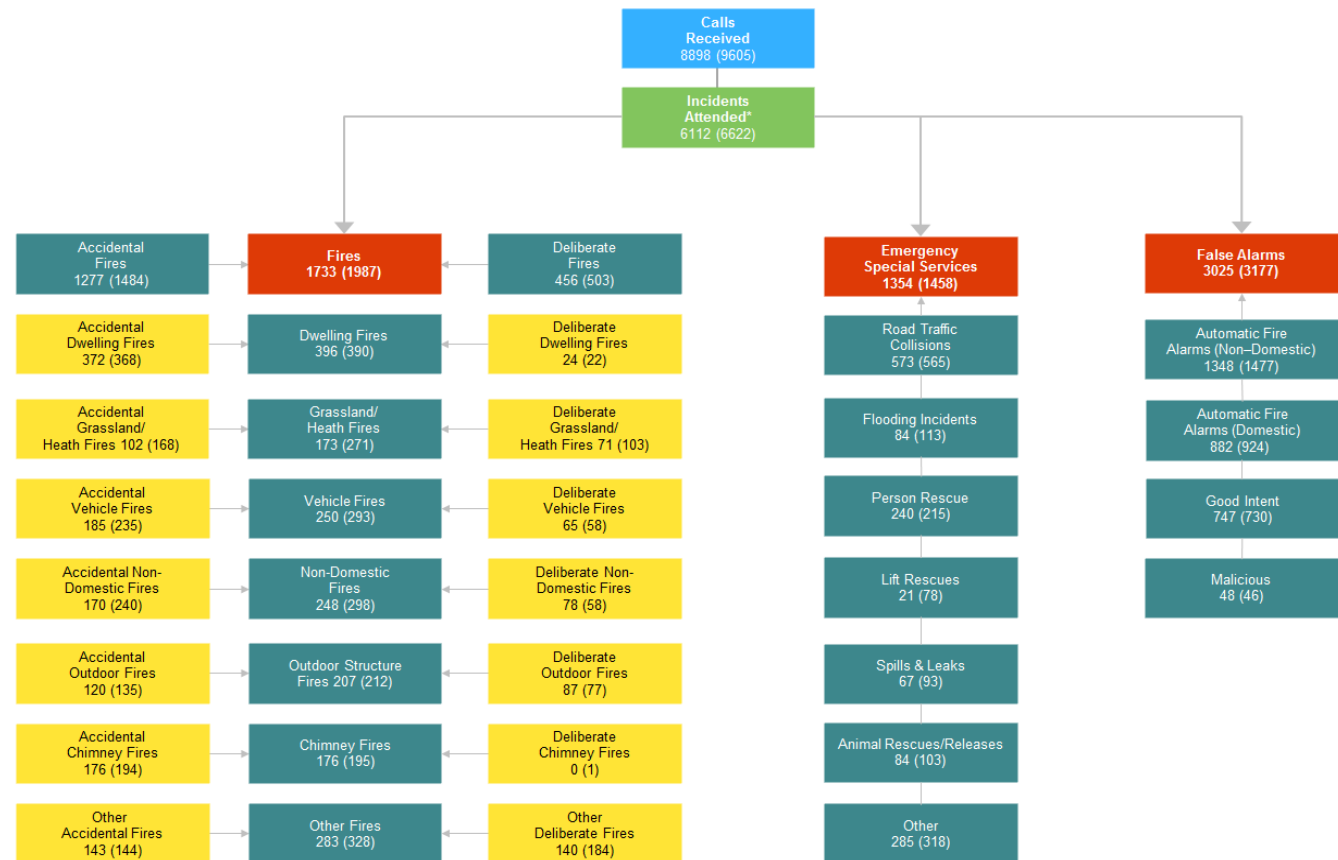
Also, in 2014-15 HWFRS had the third lowest rate of sickness for wholetime firefighters in the country (5.36 shifts/days per head), in a survey of 34 fire and rescue services.

Summary of 2014-15 Incidents

This table shows the breakdown of fires, special services and false alarm incidents attended by the Service last year, with the 2013-14 equivalent figures shown in brackets. The figures are used for comparison with other fire and rescue services and for reporting to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

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 the scene and were not required, exercises, and where crews are asked to stand by.

Overall performance data, including 'key performance indicators' (or KPIs), are reported to the Authority's [Policy and Resources Committee](#) every quarter – these reports can be found on the Service website.



* These are incidents attended within the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service area only.

Our performance: five-year trends

All incidents



The 6,112 incidents attended in 2014-15 is the lowest number we have ever recorded and is a 25 per cent fall since 2010-11. In fact, that is more than 3,000 fewer incidents than we attended just ten years ago. Over this period, the Service's

community and business safety work has focused on increasing people's awareness of the dangers of fire and water and the need for care on the roads. With our partner organisations we are also helping communities to be well prepared should emergencies happen.

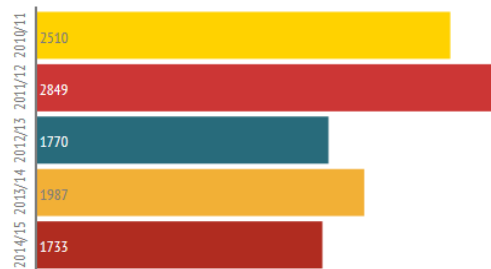
Special service incidents



Special service incidents are those other than fire and false alarms, and include road traffic collisions, flooding, person rescues, lift rescues, spills/leaks and animal rescues. In the last five years, the number of incidents has

fallen by 24 per cent, including a seven per cent fall since 2013-14. Within this figure there was a small increase in road traffic collisions (RTCs) attended – up from 565 to 573 – though overall there has been a 12 per cent fall in the number of RTCs attended over the last five years.

All fires



The number of fires attended has fallen by more than 30 per cent in the last five years, including a 13 per cent fall since 2013-14. Within this figure the number of primary fires – mainly fires in buildings and vehicles or where five or

more fire engines are required – was down by 10 per cent since 2013-14. The number of secondary fires, such as grassland and heath fires, was also down by almost 34 per cent while chimney fires were down by almost 10 per cent. There was a small increase in accidental dwelling fires from 368 to 372, and this is an area for increased community safety work with those groups that are most at risk from fire.

False alarms



The number of false alarms attended has fallen by more than 20 per cent in the last five years, including an almost five per cent fall since 2013-14. We attended 2,230 automatic false alarms in 2014-15, a fall of 23 per cent in five years, a

reflection of the valuable work of business fire safety officers and the impact of call challenging by Fire Control officers.

Our work completed in 2014-15

In the last Annual Report we reported that one of the biggest challenges facing the Fire Authority was the need to balance the budget with fewer resources available. We expect this challenge to remain for a few more years to come, but a lot has been happening over the last 12 months to tackle the issue. We have balanced the budget for 2015-16 and 2016-17 through further savings, helped to offset any compulsory redundancies through careful workforce planning and made changes to our fire and emergency cover arrangements following this year's publication of the CRMP 2014-2020.

Behind the scenes we've also been making plans to tackle the issues beyond 2016-17, with a major new programme of projects

called the 2020 Vision Programme. We also won £4.2 million from the Government's Fire Transformation Fund, which will support two of the projects.

At the same time, we've been able to continue our programme of fire station improvements, developed our range of safety-critical training for firefighters and continued to deliver a quality service for the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

This section expands on these areas along with other initiatives and activities in the year.

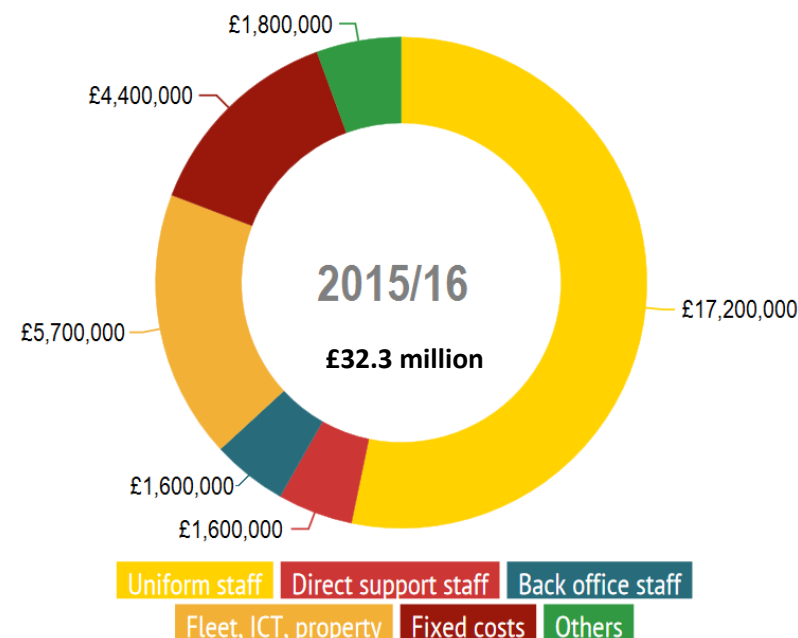
Budget savings

Last year, we reported we'd managed to set a balanced budget of £32.6 million for 2014-15, while also cutting more than £4 million from the budget year on year since 2010-11. In 2014-15, with the scale of cutbacks required, we still needed to find another £2.1 million by 2016-17.

To tackle this, we have made further reductions in our workforce, including managers and support staff, made changes to crewing at fire stations, cut our spending budgets and removed two fire engines from the Service's fleet. By doing this, we have managed to make savings totalling £6.4 million by 2015-16 with a negligible impact on the services we deliver.

By 2019-20 the full implementation of these measures will total £6.7 million annually, of which only £100,000 (less than two per cent) has had an impact on our frontline response.

These savings, along with some small improvements in income from Council Tax and business rates, mean the Fire Authority has been able to achieve a balanced budget for 2015-16 and a virtually balanced budget for the following year.



2015/16 Budget breakdown

Beyond 2016-17 the financial picture is less clear, but from our estimates of public sector savings still needed, the Fire Authority is likely to have to find a further £3.3 million between 2016-17 and 2019-20. For further information on the spending gap up to 2019-20, see the section "Resourcing the Future – financial information" later in this report.

Workforce planning

With the majority of our budget being spent on employees, it is inevitable the savings needed since 2010-11 have had an impact on staff numbers. In March 2011 the Service had a staffing level of 763, while in April 2015 the staffing level was 659.

Further reductions were approved by the Fire Authority in October 2014 as part of the changes to fire and emergency cover agreed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 (see the next page for more details). This requires a reduction of 44 wholetime firefighter posts, and in combination with other reductions following departmental reviews, approximately 55 uniformed posts will not be supported by the Authority's budget. This does not mean our frontline service provision from wholetime firefighters has changed,

but that we have reorganised how we deliver services to become more efficient.

The timescale required for the reductions mean planned retirements and natural turnover will not be sufficient to achieve the reduction. Therefore, the Service has begun a programme of temporary secondments of firefighters to neighbouring fire and rescue services – Shropshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands and Mid & West Wales – and the Fire Authority has approved voluntary redundancy for those who wish to apply. This will help to ensure there is a controlled reduction in workforce numbers in line with the CRMP requirements. Full details can be found in the [Workforce Planning](#) report in the Fire Authority section of the Service website.

Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 (CRMP)

The CRMP was published in October 2014 and sets out the overall approach to how we'll be delivering our services in the future. This is based on our understanding of how risk is changing across the two counties and our analysis of what needs to be done to continue delivering the best service we can at a time when financial resources are decreasing.

The CRMP included a review of the way in which we provide fire and emergency cover (response) services, and set out a number of changes that would help to find savings while continuing to provide an effective, efficient and sustainable service in the future. It involved removing two on-call fire engines from our fleet of 43 fire engines, which was carried out in November 2014, and making changes to the crewing system at Hereford and Worcester Fire Stations and the number of firefighters required on a fire engine. This also required the removal of 44 wholetime firefighter posts, which also helps towards the savings required.

In February 2015, following a feasibility study, the Fire Authority agreed to introduce the Day Crewing Plus crewing model to replace wholetime crewing on the second fire engines at Hereford and

Worcester Fire Stations. Further details can be found on the [Fire Authority pages](#) of the Service website.



The [CRMP 2014-2020](#) document and related plans can be found in the [Publications section](#) of the Service website.

2020 Vision Programme



In the CRMP we considered how different the Service might look like in 2020. We said the challenge of delivering excellent quality services with fewer resources and staff would be difficult and we would need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances.

To ensure we are able to manage this successfully we have developed a single, far-reaching programme of projects that we

believe will fundamentally transform the Service. Having a single programme gives a strong focus on the future and clarity of vision in working towards 2020. There are 11 projects, each of which is critical to protecting the future of the Service and ensuring its on-going resilience. Work on each project got underway during the year and you can find an update on progress in the section "Our work to be completed in 2015-16".

Between them, the 11 projects will change how some of our services are delivered, including through increased working with other agencies, and improving our own response service through new technologies and new fire stations. A short summary of each project is set out in the following table.

	Project	Summary	Key Benefits
1	CRMP	This project implemented the CRMP 2014-2020, including the agreed changes to fire and emergency cover. It was completed by May 2015	Sustainable and efficient prevention, protection and response services focused on community safety, firefighter safety and quality.
2	Payroll	This project transferred the delivery of the Service's payroll service from Worcestershire County Council to Warwickshire County Council. The changeover took place at the start of the 2015-16 financial year.	Delivery of a more cost-effective, streamlined payroll service.
3	Evesham Fire Station	This project sees collaboration with Wychavon District Council and the Waitrose supermarket company to move the fire station to a brand new facility, freeing up the existing site for town centre redevelopment.	Benefits to local residents through town centre improvements plus a new, more efficient, cost-effective state-of-the-art fire station.
4	Project Arrow	This project aims to develop collaborative opportunities with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and Warwickshire County Council.	Sustainable, resilient and more efficient fire and rescue services for the communities of the three counties.
5	Place Partnership (JPV)	This project will amalgamate the Service's property functions with five other local partners in a new and unique public sector company called Place Partnership Ltd. It was previously called the Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) during the project's development stage.	More efficient use of building property and resources, as part of a highly innovative estates management partnership.

	Project	Summary	Key Benefits
6	Public Services Network (PSN)	This project is part of the Government's high-performance network, which helps public sector organisations work together, reduce duplication and share resources. It incorporates Protective Security to help secure the Service's data in accordance with national requirements, ensuring we are resilient against physical and cyber-attacks.	More effective partnership working through a dedicated, secure network and shared ICT services, with improved emergency service responses to multi-agency incidents.
7	Wyre Forest Hub	This project aims to develop a single 'blue light hub' in the Wyre Forest area and includes multiple emergency response partners. It won financial support from the Government's Transformation Fund.	A modern, centrally-located hub for emergency service partners providing greater opportunities for sharing expertise and facilities.
8	Hereford Fire Station	This project aims to develop a new fire station in Hereford to replace the existing station, which is in a poor condition and no longer suitable. We are working closely with Herefordshire Council and West Mercia Police to build a joint police and fire station for the city.	Greater collaboration between blue light services providing greater opportunities for sharing expertise and facilities.
9	Hindlip (Headquarters relocation)	This project will move Service Headquarters to co-locate with West Mercia Police at their Hindlip Park site. It won financial support from the Government's Transformation Fund and will help to foster a closer working relationship between the two blue light services as well as producing ongoing savings.	Co-location of management teams creating opportunities for closer collaboration, improvements in working practices and greater efficiencies.

	Project	Summary	Key Benefits
10	Fire Control	This project enhances the Service's 999 response resilience in association with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and also involves co-locating with West Mercia Police's control centre as part of the plans to move Fire Service HQ to Hindlip	Greater resilience and opportunities for intelligence and data sharing between blue light partners.
11	Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)	This project will implement a new national radio scheme to replace services currently provided by Airwave. The new national system will enable the three emergency services – police, fire and ambulance – to share an extensive, highly secure and resilient integrated voice and broadband data mobile communications network.	A more cost-effective, operationally efficient and demand-led service providing secure, resilient and modernised communications to help emergency services protect the public and save lives.

£4.27 million from the Fire Transformation Fund

The list of 2020 Vision projects above includes two projects that won funding from the Government's Fire Transformation Fund; the Wyre Forest Hub and the Hindlip project. The fund aims to help fire and rescue authorities deliver better and more efficient frontline services for the public.

The Fire Authority's successful bids were two of 37 projects across the country awarded a share of £75 million to help transform the way in which services are delivered. Both projects were able to demonstrate they met the fund's strict criteria of delivering better services and at a lower cost to the public.

The successful bids will help the Fire Authority sustain services into the future.

More details on the progress of each project can be found in the section "Our work to be completed in 2015-16".

New fire stations



While funding issues continue to challenge the Service to find new and more cost-effective ways of delivering services, we

remain committed to ensuring our fire stations provide a modern, efficient and secure environment for our firefighters and the local communities they serve.

In April we saw the opening of the new Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station (pictured above), an innovative approach to sharing facilities as well as costs. Later in the year, in July, crews moved back in to the newly rebuilt and modernised Malvern Fire Station, which will also save on-going running costs. Then in May, work commenced on a new fire station for Worcester to replace the outdated premises at Copenhagen Street in the city centre, which will be sold to help to provide more funding for future building projects (see below).



Official opening of the new Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station by HRH Princess Alexandra, 30th October 2014



New Worcester Fire Station opens



In May 2014 building work began on the new fire station for Worcester. Located at the Great Western

Business Park off Tolladine Road, the new station includes enhanced training and lecture facilities and incorporates the latest energy efficiency features.



Just a year later, on Monday 11 May, 2015, crews moved over to the new Worcester Fire Station. To mark the occasion, there was a final parade outside the old Copenhagen Street fire station and a convoy of fire engines made their way to their new home station.



The new station includes modern welfare amenities for firefighting crews, an advanced training facility, multi-use lecture facilities and provision for the Young Firefighters Association.

An official opening for the new fire station will take place later in the year.



Exercise Sodor

Training in highly realistic situations is crucial to ensuring our firefighters are able to respond to any real emergency quickly, effectively and safely.

Exercise Sodor was held at two sites in October 2014 and is one of the largest training events the Service has ever coordinated. It simulated a large rail crash within a tunnel and a collision on the exit of the tunnel, using the actual lines, sheds and tunnels at Worcester Shrub Hill railway station and the Severn Valley Railway in Kidderminster. The first attending emergency crews were faced with challenging and realistic scenes of overwhelming devastation with more than 100 casualties and people trapped. All the major emergency services were involved and the exercise represented a major test of multi-agency liaison and incident management. We all hope such massive disasters don't ever happen, but if they do, such exercises



help communities have the confidence that our crews and emergency services colleagues are well equipped and well prepared to cope with whatever challenges they face. [LINK TO VIDEO HERE](#)



Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue and rail crews working together at the major rail collision exercise at Worcester Shrub Hill railway station on 19th October 2014.

Other training highlights

A. Tactical Ventilation Techniques (Feb 2015)

During the year all wholetime firefighters were trained in more advanced tactical ventilation techniques. This involves the controlled and safe removal of smoke and other fumes at a building fire by using mechanical fans or the wind to ventilate affected parts of the building to improve conditions for firefighters and anyone trapped inside. This highly effective technique was brought into practice in February 2015. All on-call firefighters were provided with awareness training; practical training will commence in 2015-16.



The small photos show one of the portable fans and a demonstration of how smoke can be controlled in various parts of a building while the larger photo shows the training in practice at the Peterchurch Strategic Training Facility.

B. Road traffic collision training programme (Feb 2015)

All firefighters completed a refresher training programme covering a wide range of vehicle-related incidents including road traffic collisions, farm vehicles and livestock carriers, as well as ultra-low emission vehicles such as hybrid fuelled cars. Training included the use of the Service's ultra-heavy rescue vehicles at incidents involving large goods vehicles and coaches. It also covered firefighter welfare issues arising from exposure to traumatic incidents.



C. Business fire safety training (April 2014)

Every wholtime watch in the Service has completed technical fire safety training enabling them to carry out Business Fire Safety Checks at business premises across the two counties. The check involves a practical inspection aimed at preventing fires, and is a way of checking if businesses have the measures required by law to protect people from fire.

The training also helps to increase firefighters' understanding of issues that can inform tactical planning at building fires, specifically the effect of a building's structure on how fire spreads and different approaches to emergency evacuation in high life-risk premises and high-rise buildings. The training has been extended to on-call firefighters starting with the most risk-critical fire safety issues.

In 2014-15, firefighters carried out more than 450 Business Fire Safety Checks and there were more than 1,100 inspections and visits to businesses by fire safety officers.

D. Further support to training

i. New INTEL process developed

This process keeps up-to-date records of the main risks in all our fire station areas. It makes sure we know which sites and premises might have a big impact on public safety if there's an incident, and what kinds of hazards crews could face at the scene.

ii. Incident Command Suite enhancements

Incident commanders are the officers who take charge at incidents we attend. They make sure our crews are well organised to deal with incidents quickly, effectively and safely. We carry out regular assessments to keep incident commanders fully trained and the Incident Command Suite at the Training Centre is a key part of this. The suite has simulation software, which can now model scenarios based on the top 15 risks identified in the INTEL process giving incident commanders a highly realistic training experience. The training scenarios can also be modelled for training at local fire stations so there is less impact on crews. Further enhancements will include modelling local risks identified in the INTEL process.

iii. National JESIP training programme completed

JESIP stands for the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme](#). It was set up following the 7/7 London bombings in 2005 to help improve the ways in which police, fire and ambulance services work together at major and complex incidents. The aim was to better understand each other's expertise and ways of working so they can jointly deal with an emergency. The programme is now complete, and the learning is being spread throughout the Service.

iv. National guidance: OGBA and PORIS

We have updated all our breathing apparatus procedures and operational risk information in line with government guidance and training will be carried out in 2015-16. This helps to make sure firefighters are as safe as possible in carrying out their duties.

OGBA stands for [Operational Guidance: Breathing Apparatus](#) and PORIS stands for [Provision of Operational Risk Information System](#).

v. Fire Simulation Training

At the Defford facility near Pershore, we've created a new fire simulation facility using shipping containers with moveable internal walls to produce a challenging training environment. This helps firefighters practice working in difficult conditions.



vi. Operational Assurance completed

Worcestershire County Council's Internal Audit completed an audit of the Service's Operational Assurance systems in January 2015 and gave an overall rating of 'significant assurance'. This is highly creditable as it focuses on six safety critical areas: Training, Intelligence (Intel), Policies, Active Incident Monitoring, Thematic Reviews and External Health & Safety Factors. Operational Assurance supports the Service's commitment to firefighter and community safety, and it plays a key role in Service improvement.



An important part of this is [Active Incident Monitoring](#), a web-based system that was launched in July 2014 which helps managers to monitor the performance of incident commanders at an incident against specific national occupational standards set for their role. More than 250 officers have been enrolled on the system, from incident commanders-in-development through to the Chief Fire Officer, and more than 150 incidents and exercises have been monitored to date.

Operational and Organisational Changes

The Service is constantly changing as it seeks more effective and efficient ways to deliver its services in the light of the financial circumstances and with the aim of improving services for the communities of the two counties. Among the changes during the year were the following:

A. District restructure

Following a review of flexible duty officers (managers who can provide additional support at complex or protracted incidents; there is always a minimum of six on duty 24 hours a day), the pool of officers has reduced from 28 to 24. The removal of these four station commander posts has added to the significant management savings already made towards tackling the budget issues, though it has increased the workload of the remaining officers. District boundaries have been realigned to take account of this reduction by moving the management of Tenbury Wells and Ledbury Fire Stations from West District to North and South Districts respectively.

B. New Community Risk department

Over the last year as part of the CRMP consultations, the Community Safety and Technical Fire Safety teams were reviewed. Following the review, the prevention work of Community Safety and the protection work of Technical Fire Safety were brought together to create a single 'Community Risk' department. This will help to deliver a coordinated and focused approach to delivering these services across the two counties. The merger also achieved significant ongoing savings of £265,000 with the removal of eight posts.

C. Human Resources and Development department

With the major changes happening across the Service, all of which affect the workforce, the opportunity was taken to restructure the Human Resources department so it is more able to support staff through the changes as well in their day-to-day work with communities. The restructure brings in support for firefighter development, which was formerly managed through the Training Centre, and includes the secondment of a senior manager from West Midlands Fire Service, bringing additional expertise and experience while also providing an opportunity to share resources.

D. Review of ICT services completed

A full review of the Information and Communication Technology services was carried out during the year to ensure they remain resilient and secure. This included a successful annual audit of ICT processes and procedures by Worcestershire County Council.

E. New payroll provider

A new Payroll contract for all staff was established with Warwickshire County Council. The new system will generate savings and efficiencies and was introduced in April 2015. The payroll project is one of the eleven 2020 Vision projects.

F. Co-location with West Mercia Police

The Operational Policy team and the Emergency Planning Officer have moved to the West Mercia Police headquarters at Hindlip, which will help to foster further good working relationships between the two blue light services.

G. Place Partnership Ltd. formed



Another 2020 Vision project, this major initiative was formally approved at the meeting of the Fire Authority in December 2014. The Service is one of six local partner organisations that have agreed to amalgamate their property departments into a single, publicly owned company called Place

Partnership Ltd. The new company will manage the estates for the Fire Authority, Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City Council, Redditch Borough Council, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police, and aims to reduce duplication of effort, work and costs, share best practice, and ultimately meaning better customer service, better protected frontline service and all at less cost to the local taxpayer.

H. Project Arrow

Project Arrow was established in early 2014 to explore opportunities for collaborative working between the Service, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and Warwickshire County Council, particularly in terms of helping to relieve the anticipated funding pressures from 2017 onwards. A project team and board have been established and a report to the Fire Authority in December 2014 ([Closer Working with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)) sets out the details of an agreement to progress operational collaboration and to continue exploring further opportunities, including with other partner organisations.

Operational collaboration involves aligning policies and procedures, systems, resources, guidance and best practice so there is

improved consistency in areas such as operational support, training, development, technical services, fire protection and prevention, and health and safety.

The focus is on preparing the groundwork for relieving funding pressures beyond 2017 and to ensure continued resilient, sustainable and safe service delivery for the communities of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire. This work will develop further throughout 2015-16.

Community Safety highlights

During the year more than 3,000 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) were carried out by firefighters and community risk officers across both counties. The Service directs its resources to those most at risk, with HFSCs targeted towards elderly and vulnerable people and disadvantaged groups. During an HFSC, our officers are able to recognise when other agency interventions are required, so with permission of the individual concerned, their details are shared with other partners through our 'signposting' procedures.

Supporting vulnerable people



Signposting connects people to services for assistance when they are currently not receiving that help or support. We use our Signposting service to engage the help of our partner agencies – such as Health

and Social Care, Housing, Neighbourhood Policing Teams – to provide assistance to the people who need help the most. Last year the Signposting service received 1,226 referrals for Home Fire Safety Checks for the more vulnerable members in our communities and out of these referrals we then connected people to

additional services which led to a further 1,663 requests for extra help to keep people safer in their own homes. In addition to engaging other partners through Signposting, we also fit smoke alarms and help people maintain their escape routes.



Severe hoarding (pictured above) is not only a serious fire risk, it also indicates the householder needs additional help from other support services. This is an example of where the Signposting service can make the right referrals to improve the vulnerable person's quality of life as well as keeping them safe in their home.

Safeguarding



We work in partnership with safeguarding teams in Herefordshire and Worcestershire for those adults and children who may be at a higher level of risk to ensure their safety and protection. Many agencies work together to make sure vulnerable people are given the support they need.



Fire setter interventions

Fire setter interventions were delivered by the Community Safety team. These interventions target young people who have been involved with inappropriate fire setting. The young people are either identified during the Service's HFSCs or by request from partner agencies (generally the police, probation services, youth offending teams and health services). The intervention work aims to educate the individuals about their behaviour, and the dangers, costs, and overall impact on the wider community of their activity.

Young people

More than 4,000 young people were provided with community safety education through a wide range of initiatives including: Crucial Crew (a multi-agency Herefordshire initiative aimed at Year 6 pupils), Young Citizens Challenge (a multi-agency Worcestershire initiative aimed at Year 6 pupils), Dying 2 Drive (a road safety programme delivered to Year 11 pupils), and Green Light (a road safety programme delivered to colleges and sixth forms, linked to the Safer Roads Partnership). Department staff also worked with Action for Children, a Princes Trust education initiative, through local school projects for Year 6 pupils.

Dying 2 Drive

Dying 2 Drive is a free multi-agency road safety scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Herefordshire. Our educational events involve a realistic road traffic collision (RTC) reconstruction followed by powerful interactive workshops. The scheme is aimed at Year 11 students who will



currently be car passengers and soon become young drivers.

For more information, visit the Service's website [here](#).

Community Safety Events

Over the year, our teams have carried out safety campaigns, fire station open days and demonstrations to help make people more aware of fire, road and water safety, including issues like smoking, fireworks and staying safe around water. In the photograph below, the firefighter is demonstrating the explosive impact of putting a cup of water onto a chip pan fire.



Partnerships

Partnership arrangements were secured with around 20 local organisations working to promote fire safety in the home. The partnerships aim to share knowledge about vulnerable people, enabling the Service to access hard-to-reach individuals known to other groups. The Service then provides Home Fire Safety Check and Signposting referrals to those identified where appropriate. Partnerships include: Fortis Living (Worcestershire Community Housing & Festival Housing), Worcestershire Health & Care Trust (older adult mental health teams), Bromsgrove District Housing Trust, and the Royal Voluntary Service.

The team also continued to support two multi-agency initiatives involved in risk management and public protection, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) dealing with high-risk cases of domestic violence and abuse, and the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) dealing with the management of violent and sexual offenders.

The team also continued to develop its pool of Community Risk Volunteers, with 41 volunteers across the two counties providing support through fire safety talks, accompanying staff involved in fire setter initiatives and attending events.

New vehicles

A new Land Rover off-road firefighting vehicle was introduced at Bewdley Fire Station in November 2014. This will help firefighters to reach incidents in less accessible areas. It's fitted with a FirExpress fogging firefighting system, ideal for grass and heathland fires, and the vehicle can also carry equipment or personnel to incidents. It replaces the Pinzgauer and Argocat off-road vehicles that were at Bewdley.

Responding to industrial action

Throughout the year, the Fire Brigades Union continued their campaign of industrial action in their long-running pensions dispute with the Government. With careful business resilience planning in place, despite 39 separate instances of industrial action in 2014-15 that ranged from a few hours to several days, the Service was able to continue providing fire cover across the whole of the two counties with no noticeable impact on public safety.



Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS): internal firefighting

The Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) uses compressed air, water and foam to generate an effective and efficient fire fighting spray that significantly improves internal conditions for firefighters and potential casualties. As a mixed spray it is more effective than water alone because of its enhanced cooling capabilities.

During 2014-15 the Service introduced a CAFS appliance at Ross-on-Wye Fire Station. The staff at Ross-on-Wye were also given training in both internal and external firefighting techniques using CAFS at a variety of likely incidents such as vehicle and property fires.

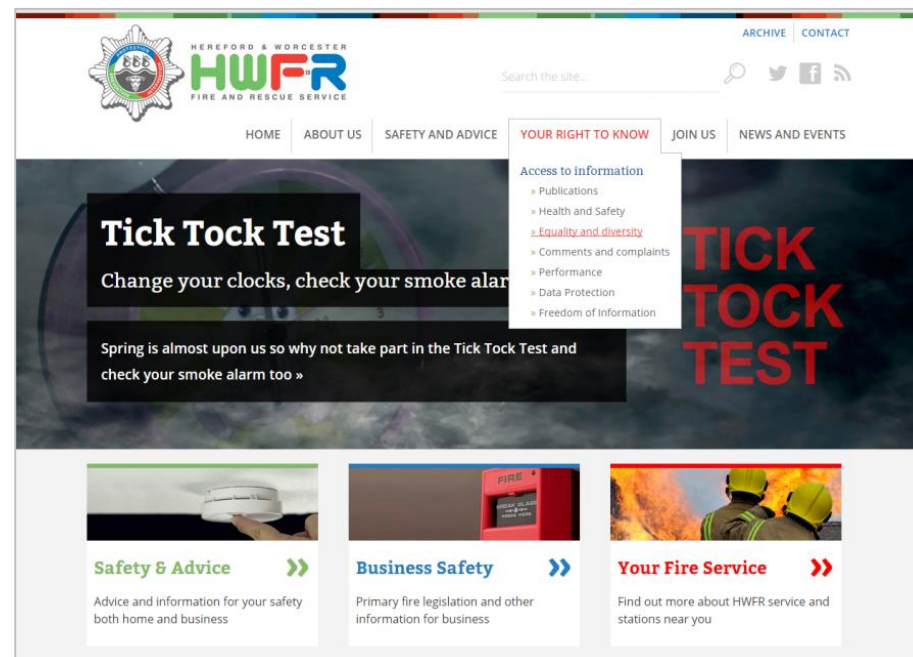
CAFS appliances are already based at Redditch, Peterchurch, Whitchurch and Upton-upon-Severn fire stations.



New Service website went live in February 2015

The Service's website has been completely redesigned with the assistance of students from The Worcester Business School's Media Lab. The new website is easier for visitors to read and navigate around, with interactive features such as the ability to apply for a free Home Fire Safety Check, keep up with the latest news through RSS updates and an events calendar. The website is also responsive, so it automatically adapts for viewing on a tablet or smart phone, a feature currently offered by only a few fire and rescue service websites.

This is a major step forward in our aims to make communities safer and more aware of what we do through the provision of good advice, safety campaigns and other news articles. You can view the website by clicking [here](#).



Competitions, awards and fundraising

Throughout the year, our crews take part in many national events aimed at developing and showcasing the skills of firefighters across the country. Two events where the Service's teams were outstanding were the RTC Extrication Challenge organised by the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation in April 2014, and the national BA Challenge held at the Fire Service College in October 2014.

A. RTC Extrication Challenge

This regional competition was held in Hampshire with the Service represented by a team of firefighters from Ross-on-Wye and Hereford Fire Stations. The competition involved safely releasing a casualty from a car involved in a road traffic collision within 20 minutes. 17 teams took part including the current national and world champions, but it was the team from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue that won the day, winning in all three main categories; Incident Command, Medical and Technical skills.

This was a great achievement for the team and fully demonstrates the quality of their individual skills and team-working abilities, as well as their overall dedication and commitment. It is also a reflection of the excellent training carried out within the Service. The

team has now been invited to take part in an international event in Hamburg, Germany, in June 2015.



B. National BA Challenge

Two teams represented the Service in this national breathing apparatus challenge. In total, 13 teams from around the country took part in the event, which tested their ability to resolve scenarios,



which involved building fires with multiple people, reported within a 30-minute timeframe. The Service's teams came a very creditable 5th and 10th overall, but the real winner was the professionalism,

skills and knowledge of the fire and rescue community being highlighted in a prestigious showcase event.

C. Worcester Works Well Health & Wellbeing Award

The staff of Kidderminster Fire Station achieved the 'Worcester Works Well Health & Wellbeing Award, Level 2.' This is a considerable achievement for the station, and it demonstrates our Service's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of staff.

D. YFA Passing Out Parade

In May 2014, we celebrated the fourth joint Redditch/Droitwich Young Firefighters Association passing out parade. 19 of the Service's newest recruits demonstrated the many firefighting and rescue skills they had learned over the last five months. All the young people involved fully deserved their well-earned certificates presented by the Chief Fire Officer.



E. Fundraising for the Fire Fighters Charity

The Service is proud of its spirit of generosity, and the personal dedication and commitment of our fire and rescue staff is second to none when it comes to raising money for good causes. One outstanding success during the year was the completion of a “Mountain Trilogy” by the Service’s Group Commander Martin Lown in aid of the Fire Fighters Charity (FFC). Other achievements were the Service’s contributions to textile recycling in addition to the always popular charity car washes at fire stations and bike rides.

‘Mountain Trilogy’ Fundraising Challenge

During the year, Group Commander Martin Lown (pictured right), who is also the Service FFC co-ordinator, ascended more than 4,000 metres while completing three mountain climbs – Mount Kilimanjaro, Everest Base Camp and Mount Toubkal in the Atlas Mountains. He did all this wearing a full fire kit and a breathing apparatus set in all conditions and in temperatures ranging from -28°C to 35°C. Through public donations and corporate sponsorship, Martin managed to raise more than £12,000 for the Fire Fighters Charity.



Fire Fighters Charity textile recycling reaches £1,000,000



In the last four years, this national textile recycling scheme has raised more than £1 million for the Fire Fighters Charity. More than 7,000 tonnes of clothing have been diverted away from landfill sites, such that the charity now receives an annual income of £300,000 from funds raised by recycling unwanted clothing, shoes and household textiles.

The Service has played a great part in this, with more than £13,000 income generated in the last year, up 16 per cent on the previous year. There are 11 textile banks across the Service area and plans for more. You can recycle clothing and textiles at the fire stations in Ewyas Harold, Peterchurch, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Redditch, Bewdley, Pershore, Leominster, Upton-Upon-Severn and Tenbury Wells, as well as Bransford Nurseries in Worcester.



Examples of fundraising for the Fire Fighters Charity: a typical car wash and a 100-mile cycle ride from Pebworth Fire Station.

Our work to be completed in 2015-16

Throughout last year we continued to make plans to take the Service forward through the ongoing financial challenges. Our plans were outlined in the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020, and more detailed projects are being developed through the 2020 Vision Programme.

This section of the Annual Report provides an overview of what we'll be doing in 2015-16 in each of these areas.

CRMP Action Plan 2015-16

The CRMP 2014-2020 gave an overview of the services we will be delivering until 2020 to ensure we meet the main principles of Our Strategy – firefighter safety, community safety and quality services. It's broken down into the Service's four main responsibilities – prevention, protection, response and resilience – and a fifth theme, 'organisational support and development', which covers the range of support functions often termed 'back office' services.

CRMP Theme	Objectives 2014-2020
1 Prevention	Delivering activities that aim to stop incidents happening in the first place.
2 Protection	Making sure buildings where people work, shop and visit are as safe as possible.
3 Response	Being able to act quickly, safely, effectively and efficiently in the event of an emergency.
4 Resilience	Being as prepared as possible for whatever emergency might happen.
5 Organisational Support and Development	Making sure the Service is able to deliver its main responsibilities.

Prevention

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place is the most effective ways of saving lives and property. To support this over the next five years, the Community Risk department will: -

- Continue to develop our risk prevention work.
- Concentrate community safety activities on those groups most at risk
- Use risk analysis software and techniques to help to keep work targeted on changing risks.
- Work with partners to improve how risk data can be shared more effectively.

In 2015-16 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:			
a)	Develop and deliver a programme of community safety activities and campaigns focused on four main areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accidental dwelling fires • vulnerable people • arson • road safety 	d)	Evaluate youth education programmes to assess their contribution to reducing the number and severity of fires in the home and for road safety. This will include targeting, where appropriate, known challenging groups, such as those attending exclusion units.
b)	Key target audiences for community safety work in the year will be elderly people and youth engagement, for instance through the Dying 2 Drive multi-agency events (see page 40).	e)	In support of Project Arrow, share good practice with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, to include the Service's models for volunteering and signposting.
c)	Build stronger relationships with public, private and third sector partner organisations to help to share data and identify those most at risk of fire so Home Fire Safety Checks can be carried out.		

Protection

Protection work significantly reduces the risk of fire in buildings where people work, shop and visit. The work is highly specialised and involves carrying out inspections of all business premises and enforcing fire safety measures when required. Over the five years, the work will involve:

- Advising business about the risks of fire and ensuring they have appropriate fire safety precautions in place.
- Carrying out risk-based audits of premises identified as posing higher fire risks than others.
- Training more fire and rescue officers in delivering legislative fire safety requirements.
- Sharing technical expertise and good practice with partners to foster a consistent approach to fire safety.

In 2015-16 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:			
a)	Extend fire safety training to more firefighters and Community Risk team members, with all training based on recognised national standards to ensure consistency between fire safety auditors and inspectors.	d)	Continue work with Shropshire and Warwickshire fire and rescue services to share good practice and expertise, including work to align practices and share resources with Warwickshire FRS in support of Project Arrow. This will focus on ensuring consistency in approach, such as sharing the same forms and procedures where appropriate.
b)	Engage with businesses in the implementation of Primary Authority (PA) Partnerships where appropriate, following the inclusion of fire and rescue services in PA legislation.		
c)	Deliver thematic fire safety checks at residential care homes and larger licensed premises.		

Response

Being able to act quickly, safely and effectively in the event of a fire and rescue emergency is at the heart of our response services. To maintain this, our firefighters need to be well trained and well equipped to be able to tackle all kinds of emergencies across the two counties. At the same time, we need to ensure our fire and emergency response arrangements remain appropriate in the light of changing risks and available resources. Over the next few years to 2020, work will involve:

- Implementing changes to fire and emergency cover arrangements as set out in the CRMP.
- Designing and delivering firefighter training courses to develop fire and rescue skills and technical knowledge.
- Enhancing training facilities to support greater practical experience in more realistic conditions.
- Sharing training expertise and facilities with other fire and rescue services to enhance skills and competence.
- Researching and understanding general and local hazards and risks.
- Reviewing operational planning arrangements with other fire and rescue services to help ensure common practice and consistency, high standards and value for money.
- Exploring and evaluating innovations in fire and emergency cover to maximise effectiveness and efficiency of response.
- Investigating new technologies to improve firefighting and rescue techniques.
- Making best use of resources and assets, including exploring opportunities with partners to share facilities.

In 2015-16 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:			
a)	<p>Implement the fire and emergency cover changes set out in the CRMP 2014-2020 to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Change the crewing on the second fire engines at Hereford and Worcester fire stations from wholetime to Day Crewing Plus in May 2015. ii. Provide appropriate rest and welfare facilities at Hereford and Worcester fire stations to accommodate Day Crewing Plus staff. iii. Maintain five riders on first response fire engines on as many occasions as possible. 	c)	<p>Deliver a range of training programmes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Commence a two-year practical programme in controlled tactical ventilation in buildings for all on-call crews. ii. Embed high-speed driver legislation into blue light driver training, including refresher courses for the more than 300 blue light drivers in the Service. iii. Incorporate technical rescue training into core training activity, to include rope rescue, water rescue, USAR, High Volume Pump and mass decontamination. iv. Additional training to support the roll out of new equipment (see d. below). iv. Media training for all flexi-duty officers. v. Update breathing apparatus procedures and provide refresher training in light of recent Government guidance (Operational Guidance: Breathing Apparatus).
b)	<p>Continue enhancement of training scenarios for the Incident Command Suite to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Model the top service and fire station risks. ii. Improve modelling software and equipment. iii. Use mobile resources to deliver risk training scenarios at fire stations. 		

d)	Introduce new and replacement equipment including respirators and gas monitors for all fire engines, thermal imaging cameras, upgraded trauma packs, additional personal protective equipment for water rescue, replacement gas tight suits, replacement hydraulic rescue equipment, replacement working-at-height equipment and replacement fire ground communications radios.	h).	Continue the fire station replacement and rebuild programme to update and modernise buildings and facilities, including:
e).	Establish training collaboration opportunities with other fire and rescue services, including with Warwickshire and Shropshire FRSs through Project Arrow, as well as with other partners involved in multi-agency working, such as West Mercia Police and the National Health Service.		
f).	Begin to introduce a range of new and replacement appliances recognising the geography of the service area, including smaller fire engines better able to negotiate rural roads and a more appropriate replacement for the large Command Support Unit.		
g).	Incorporate further training facilities in the replacement and rebuild projects and introduce a new Strategic Training Facility for north Herefordshire.		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A new Worcester Fire Station in May 2015. ii. A new Evesham Fire Station, aiming for start on site in 2015-16 (see 2020 Vision section). iii. Investigate a new site for Hereford Fire Station including the potential for joint opportunities with other blue light services (see 2020 Vision section). iv. Develop a new fire station for Redditch and investigate further opportunities for other replacement fire stations. v. Investigate a potential site for a new 'blue light hub' in the Wyre Forest area (see 2020 Vision section). vi. Carry out refurbishment works at Service Headquarters to incorporate Place Partnership Ltd. as a new tenant, and continue preparations for Headquarters relocation to the Hindlip site (see 2020 Vision section).

Resilience

Resilience is about being as prepared as possible for whatever emergency might happen and being able to provide timely back up support at incidents. It requires having local and national contingency plans in place for all kinds of incidents, and involves working together with other emergency services. To support this over the next five years, work will involve:

- Working with other emergency services and agencies to assess risks and preparing plans to tackle them if they happen.
- Maintaining working relationships with neighbouring fire and rescue services in providing mutual assistance when needed.
- Carrying out assessments of risks specific to each local fire station area.
- Reviewing and updating procedures set out in business continuity plans for all parts of the Service.

In 2015-16 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:			
a).	Review and update all high-priority policy documents to ensure they remain current.	d).	Continue work with partner services to develop and update contingency plans for all emergency risk situations.
b).	Collate all fire station 'fall-back plans,' so crews will be able to maintain their operational response in the event of their fire station being out of action through events such as power failures, computer failures, gas leaks and flooding.	e).	Consider the findings of an audit of the Service's national resilience capabilities (USAR, High Volume Pumps, mass decontamination) to identify any areas for further development.
c).	Further roll-out of the Intel system to ensure all firefighters understand the process and to identify any new risks.		

Organisational Support and Development

Organisational Support and Development covers the range of support functions that are often termed 'back office' services, which help to make sure we continue to deliver effective frontline services. The work includes business functions such as financial and legal management, information and communications technology, human resources and corporate services as well as vehicle and equipment maintenance and property management. Over the next five years, these services will continue to provide essential support as the Authority implements its plans to transform how its services are delivered and ensure a sustainable future.

Key areas of support will include:

- Workforce planning and support;
- Financial planning and budgeting;
- Strategic planning support and partnership working;
- Information and communications technology support systems.
- Media and communications;
- Member support services.

In 2015-16 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:			
a).	Continue to support innovative ways of managing and supporting the workforce and preserving skills throughout the transformation period, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Manage secondments and staff returning from secondment. ii. Provide advice and guidance on health, fitness and wellbeing. iii. Embed the terms of the <u>Ethical Framework</u> and 		Code of Conduct through refresher training as part of the inclusiveness agenda. iv. Establish a local Pensions Board to assist in the administration of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015. v. Review Occupational Health services.

b)	Review and update key strategic documents such as the Community Risk Management Plan and Fire Authority Annual Report as new incident data and risk information becomes available.	f)	Develop a three-year ICT strategy including a review of business continuity and ensure the structure of the department is robust in order to support 2020 Vision projects and wider Service strategies.
c)	Continue to work in partnership with other public sector organisations in the delivery of major projects in the 2020 Vision Programme and provide representation at statutory partnerships such as Community Safety Partnerships.	g)	Develop a robust staging platform to support the development of the Fire Control (Command and Control) mobilising system.
d)	Continue development of the Service's interactive website and social media presence, and undertake a review of internal communications.	h)	Focus the Member Development strategy on 'Resourcing For The Future' with a programme of visits to key locations covering issues such as firefighter pensions, budgeting, the 2020 Vision Programme and fire safety.
e)	Continue the Operational Assurance safety critical theme with the introduction of Practical and Station Assurance audits covering areas such as breathing apparatus, hazardous materials, CPR and defibrillator use, gathering operational intelligence and supporting Incident Command through the Active Incident Monitoring (AIM) system. Other audits will cover Intel, Breathing Apparatus, Incident Command and National Resilience.		

2020 Vision Programme



The Service has embarked on an ambitious £18 million programme of major projects to be delivered by the year 2020. Called

the 2020 Vision Programme, it is a clear statement of intent that the Service aims to manage its own future rather than just reacting to change as it happens. The Programme consists of 11 projects that have been designed to help secure the Service's future and ensure its continued ability to provide our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services.

The projects cover a range of transformational, operational and technological solutions including:

- New fire stations for Evesham and Hereford along with a relocated Service Headquarters.
- The roll-out of vital new technology upgrades as part of national projects.
- Collaborative work with local partner organisations including West Mercia Police, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, and several local authorities and voluntary organisations.

The following tables sets out what each project intends to achieve in 2015-16.

1	Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020	<i>Implementation of FRA decisions including the feasibility of Day Crewing Plus and workforce reduction.</i>
	The CRMP is the Service's strategic plan for managing risk. Its implementation includes all the actions described in the previous section (CRMP Action Plan 2015-16), which cover the whole range of prevention, protection, response and resilience services. The actions include changes to fire and emergency cover arrangements that needed to be made to address the reduction in the Service's budget in the coming years. These changes are set out in the Response section above and are all being implemented in 2015. The changes will deliver ongoing savings each year.	
2	Payroll	<i>Transfer of payroll services from Worcestershire County Council to Warwickshire County Council</i>
	Previously the payroll function was fulfilled by Worcestershire County Council, but because the council is choosing to outsource this work the Service needed to find an alternative supplier. The Service has decided to employ Warwickshire County Council to deliver the payroll service from 1 April 2015.	
3	Evesham Fire Station	<i>Collaboration with Wychavon District Council and Waitrose supermarket to build a new fire station.</i>
	The fire station in Evesham is set to move to a brand new facility next to the town's leisure centre releasing space for a new Waitrose store to be built in its place. Liaison with West Midlands Ambulance Service will continue to establish if they are able to be involved in this project.	

4	Project Arrow	<i>Continuation of collaborative opportunities with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service</i>
	<p>A number of operational collaboration opportunities will be sought throughout the year including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Both services' training departments to work together to establish ways of delivering common training procedures. ii. Work together to establish joint operational policies for more effective cross-border working. iii. Explore further opportunities to align processes and policies in other operational areas such as fire safety, health & safety and technical support. <p>The services will also explore further collaboration opportunities within other service departments, and share experience with others, including Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>A report on progress to date and an examination of future opportunities will be taken to both Fire Authorities in late 2015.</p>	
5	Place Partnership Ltd (JPV)	<i>Amalgamation of the Service's property functions with other local partners.</i>
	<p>In December 2014, the Fire Authority agreed to amalgamate its property department with five other local partner organisations to create a single, publicly-owned company called Place Partnership Ltd. The new company will be formally launched in September 2015 and arrangements are being made to manage the transfer of staff. The company will be based at Service Headquarters and refurbishment works are taking place during summer 2015 to accommodate staff on the ground floor of the building.</p> <p>Note: Place Partnership Ltd was provisionally called the Joint Property Vehicle until it was fully registered as a company in March 2015.</p>	

6	Public Services Network (PSN)	<i>Securing data in accordance with national protocols and ensuring public bodies are resilient against physical and cyber attacks.</i>
	PSN is at the heart of the Government's ICT strategy and aims to help public sector organisations work together, reduce duplication and share resources. This national project aims to provide an assured network over which services and data can be shared securely. It incorporates Protective Security to help secure the Service's data in accordance with national requirements, ensuring resilience against physical and cyber attacks. In the coming year the Service will review and update its governance arrangements in line with PSN requirements.	
7	Wyre Forest Blue Light Hub	<i>Development of a blue light hub in the Wyre Forest area incorporating multiple response partners.</i>
	This project won £2.38 million from the Government's Fire Transformation Fund and involves the creation of a single fire station for the Wyre Forest area to replace the three existing fire stations. The new fire station will be designed as a major hub for the police and ambulance services and for voluntary sector partners, the British Red Cross and the Severn Area Rescue Association. Discussions with partner services will take place during 2015 to establish site requirements prior to identifying and purchasing a new site. Because the project involves major changes to how fire and emergency cover would be provided, an extensive public consultation programme will be delivered during 2015 prior to the project's submission to the Fire Authority for final consideration and approval.	
8	Hereford Fire Station	<i>Continued exploration of options for a new fire station, possibly as a blue light hub.</i>
	The current Hereford Fire Station is in a poor condition and not fit for the requirements of modern fire station. The Service will continue working with Herefordshire Council to identify a suitable site in the city for a new fire station, and will continue discussions with West Mercia Police about the potential for developing a joint fire and police station.	

9	Hindlip	<i>Relocation of Service Headquarters to the Hindlip site to co-locate with West Mercia Police.</i>
	<p>This project successfully attracted £1.89 million from the Government's Transformation Fund, and aims to improve services and create future financial efficiencies as part of moving Fire Service Headquarters, including Fire Control, from its present location on the outskirts of Worcester to join West Mercia Police at their headquarters at Hindlip near Worcester. The move would also foster a closer working relationship between the two blue light services as well as producing on-going savings from the co-location of HQs. Discussions are taking place with West Mercia Police to establish site requirements, and options are being developed.</p>	
10	Fire Control	<i>Replacement Command & Control system including new equipment for fire stations and mobile data terminals, plus systems support.</i>
	<p>The Fire Control team are responsible for answering 999 calls, mobilising crews to incidents and keeping in touch with firefighters at the scene. The project is developing closer working with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service – so both services have greater resilience and back-up procedures in place – and as part of the Hindlip project discussions are in progress with West Mercia Police to create a joint Command & Control centre at the police headquarters site.</p>	
11	Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)	<i>Implementation of a new national radio and communications scheme to replace Airwave.</i>
	<p>This is one of the Government's largest procurement projects ever. It aims to create a national Emergency Services Network, a mobile broadband communications service with extensive coverage enabling all emergency services to communicate together more effectively and securely in delivering their vital services. It will replace services provided by Airwave Solutions, as their contracts begin to expire in 2016. Over the next 12 months the Service will prepare a project plan to manage the delivery of this programme locally in conjunction with the police and ambulance services.</p>	

Resourcing the Future – Financial Information

This section shows what the Fire 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 2015-16	
As at the end of March 2015			<i>Budget £m</i>
Wholetime firefighters	44%	Employees	21.4
On-call firefighters	38%	Fleet, equipment, ICT, property	5.7
Support staff	15%	Capital financing*	3.2
Fire Control staff	3%	Other running costs**	2.0
Total number of employees (Fulltime equivalent - FTE)	659	Total	32.3

*Capital financing is interest and provision to repay loans.

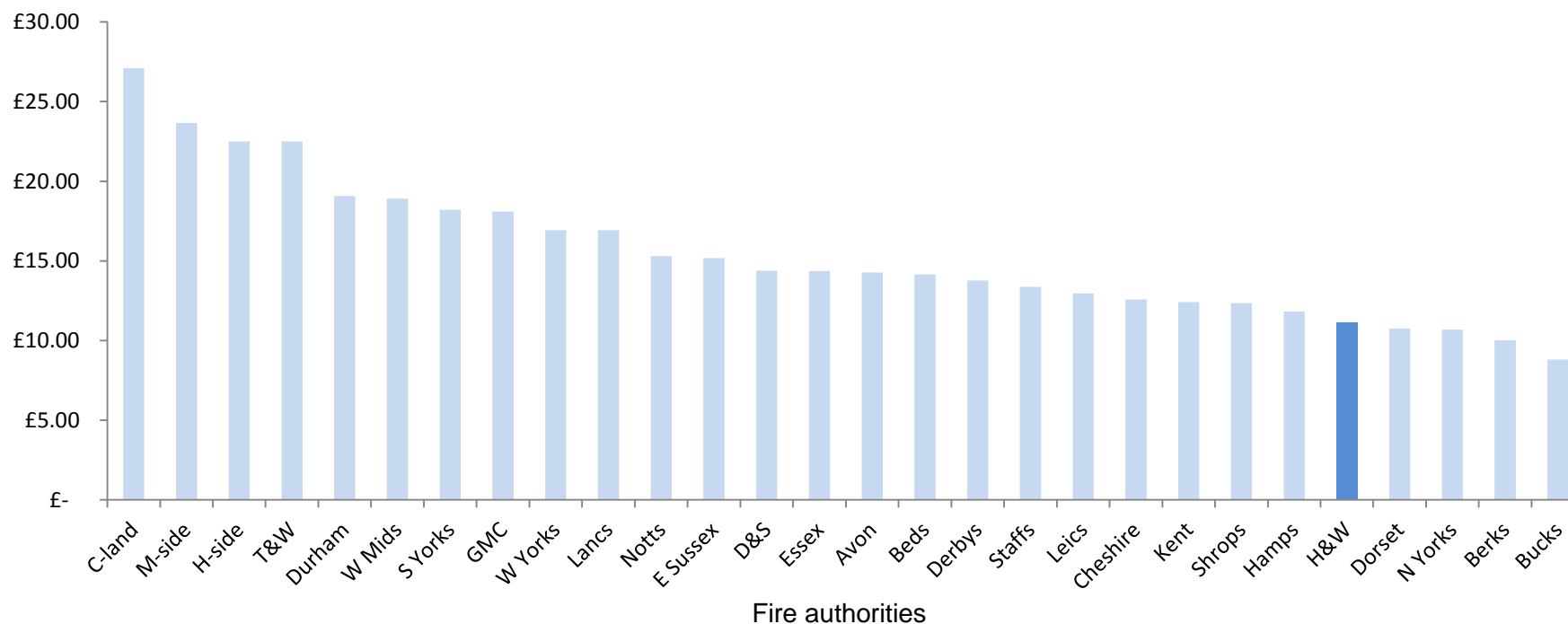
**Other running costs include training costs, community safety material, payroll services, legal costs, Fire Authority costs and insurances.

Summary of our resources	How the Service is paid for	
As at the end of March 2015		£m
27 fire stations	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Council Tax payers	20.3
41 frontline fire engines	Herefordshire and Worcestershire business rates, etc.	2.5
28 specialist vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles, aerial appliances and boats	Government grants (Revenue Support Grant, special grants)	9.5
Training Centre		
Strategic Training Facilities		
Fire Service Headquarters	Total	32.3
Operational Logistics Centre		
Urban Search and Rescue facility		

The cost of the Fire and Rescue Service to the average household in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (Council Tax Band D) is £76.50. This is above the £70 average for comparable Fire Authorities in 2015-16, but considerably less than the highest cost of £93.96. One of the reasons for this is the low level of grant we receive from Government, because of the way the formula is

worked out nationally. In the table below, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority receives just £11.11 per head of population across the two counties, while the average for comparable fire authorities is £15.43, with the highest grant being £27.10 per head of population.

Government grant per head of population 2015-16



Capital investment in 2015-16

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.

	<i>£m</i>
Fire stations / training facilities	5.6
Vehicles and equipment	1.9
ICT / communications system / minor building works	1.2
Total	8.7

Closing the spending gap

For financial planning purposes the future is split between the relatively known (that is, up to 2016-17) and the less known (from 2017-18 to 2019-20).

The Fire Authority has been planning for the earlier period for some time and the decisions and actions described in previous sections have resulted in a balanced budget for 2015-16 and a small gap of just £300,000 in 2016-17. Closing this gap is very unlikely to have any impact on frontline response.

Beyond 2016-17, the position is more speculative. All indicators suggest the period of austerity is likely to continue until at least 2019-20, and there has been no suggestion the grant reduction trend of the last four years will be any different. This means there

are likely to be fewer financial resources in 2019-20 than we are anticipating in 2016-17.

Assuming a continuation of grant reductions, an annual two per cent increase in Council Tax and provision for inflation and pay awards, a further budget gap of £1.6 million is forecast for 2017-18 rising to £3.3 million by 2019-20.

Work is currently underway with partners in other emergency services and local authorities to collaborate in the provision of back-office support functions to provide savings to meet these future gaps. It is too early to say with certainty how much of the gap these measures will meet.

What do you think of our Annual Report?

We welcome any views 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 @HWFire (<https://twitter.com/hwfire>)

or find us on Facebook at 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 it to carry out its 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 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](#)

