

PART ONE

Executive Summary

As a result of a comprehensive review of operational training provision within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) this report proposes 72 specific recommendations which have been designed to fundamentally change the way in which the Service delivers the operational training and development of its employees. In broad terms it challenges existing practices with regard to organisational structure, training facilities and methods of training delivery.

The review has been broken down into six specific sections in order to ensure that a systematic approach has been taken in all areas. The six sections are detailed below:

1. Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation (Section 4)
2. Individual Development Records/Competence Recording Systems (Section 5)
3. Current training provision (Section 6)
4. Existing training facilities (Section 7)
5. Staffing and structure of Training & Development (Section 8)
6. Budget (Section 9)

Each section has been subject to analysis of the current arrangements in place, comparison with national guidance and identification of possible areas for improvement.

The following paragraphs provide a summary of findings for each of the six sections and also the recommendations put forward for consideration by Senior Management Board (SMB). A more detailed summary of each section can be found in Sections 4 – 9 of this report.

Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation

There is currently no clear training strategy or framework document which details the Service's approach to training and development. This situation leaves the organisation vulnerable with regard to effective planning, performance monitoring and compliance with national guidance. It creates uncertainty as employees are unaware of the Service's strategic aims and objectives in this area.

This situation has been outlined during other recent internal audits of the training function, where difficulty in identifying performance against a clear strategy has been identified. Clear strategic direction and the provision of accessible supporting information is essential for the Service to confidently deliver its statutory responsibilities, whilst utilising its training resource to provide employees with an efficient and effective training function.

This review recommends that this situation should be addressed as a matter of priority, via the production of a formal strategy and supporting training framework document, which should be made available to all employees via the Service's intranet. It should, in essence, provide a central location for employees to access information relating to all areas of training and development, the rationale behind training programmes and the Service's expectations.

The specific areas for development are as follows:

- Strategy Document
- Framework Document
- Workforce Development Strategy
- Competency Training Record
- Firefighter Development Process
- Promotion Processes
- Promotion Workbooks

Individual Development Records (IDR)/Competency Recording Systems

The review has included a comprehensive examination of the current IDR which forms the very basis on which all operational training is planned and delivered. Historically the Service has taken a “broad brush” approach to routine training in the operational environment as it expects all operational staff to train in all areas of the operational role, irrespective of their local risk profile or duty system. This approach has been problematic as many employees have had difficulty discharging this requirement and maintaining such an extensive skills set, much of which can be deemed unnecessary when viewed on a risk assessed basis.

The review has identified that the current IDR system can no longer be considered to be “fit for purpose” and an alternative programme should now be developed. A new and revised IDR should be location specific, based on the local risk profile. It should also include safety critical elements and reflect Station specific specialist equipment. Such an approach will provide safer, more confident operational staff and ensure occupational competence.

The Service has already procured and installed Redkite, a web based training recording programme, which can be developed further to deliver a new location specific IDR. It should also take into account the different requirements of both Firefighters and Officers alike. This report proposes a fundamental change to the existing IDR system and coupled with improvements to technical training platforms; it should provide a robust and user friendly recording system.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) have formed the basis of initial Firefighter Development since 1997. Whilst the NVQ has maintained a standard of competence through external quality assurance for the Service, it has proven to be problematic to deliver. The level of expertise required to deliver the qualification coupled with administrative bureaucracy has meant the NVQ itself has been generally unpopular with employees. The review proposes a move away from the NVQ process to an internally accredited Firefighter Development Programme which is centrally delivered and still meets the requirements of external quality assurance.

The Service has been required to facilitate national promotion and development processes since 1996. The review, however, has identified that the expectations of central government has recently changed in this area and the Service is now free to design and operate processes which it feels are more appropriate and acceptable to employees and managers alike. National processes have been very unpopular with employees and a number of restrictions within these processes have also caused significant frustration for managers involved with promotion and development. The review therefore has

recommended a move away from the national process to one which is more user friendly to both participants and administrators of the process. A new five stage process including exercises set in a Fire Service context has been developed and proposed to Senior Management Board (SMB).

Current Training Provision

Effective training provision is key to providing a robust and competent workforce and is particularly important within an operational context. Historically, the Service has utilised a wide variety of methods to deliver training including the use of Lead Instructors based at the Training and Development Centre (TDC), use of Station/Departmental based Instructors and external training providers. The purpose of this review is to ensure that this provision is still appropriate and cost effective.

The review has identified that the Service can achieve greater efficiencies within its training resource by adopting a more centrally controlled approach. This new approach, coupled with a robust training plan should maximise the effectiveness of training delivery.

Existing Training Facilities

Currently training facilities vary significantly from Station to Station as investment to date has been limited and therefore some Stations lack the very basic amenities required to carry out routine core skills training. As a result of this, Crews have been forced to rely on central training facilities and specialist training facilities from other organisations, such as the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service. This is evident in safety critical areas such as carbonaceous Breathing Apparatus training. This situation has led to a significant amount of valuable training time being lost travelling to and from venues and could compromise operational cover and incur significant cost to the Service.

In order to address this situation the review has identified the need for the Service to provide its own Strategic Training Facilities (STFs) and underpinning STF strategy. This strategy includes detailed building specifications incorporated within the Service's Capital Asset Programme. These facilities should be strategically located so that all operational staff can access them to discharge both the routine elements of their IDR but also the specialist safety critical elements such as BA training. With this in mind it is suggested that STFs should be provided at the following locations:

- Evesham
- Kidderminster (enhance existing facility)
- Kingsland
- South Herefordshire (site yet to be identified)

Due to this recommendation being crucial to the delivery of the wider recommendations detailed within this report, SMB have already commenced this proposal.

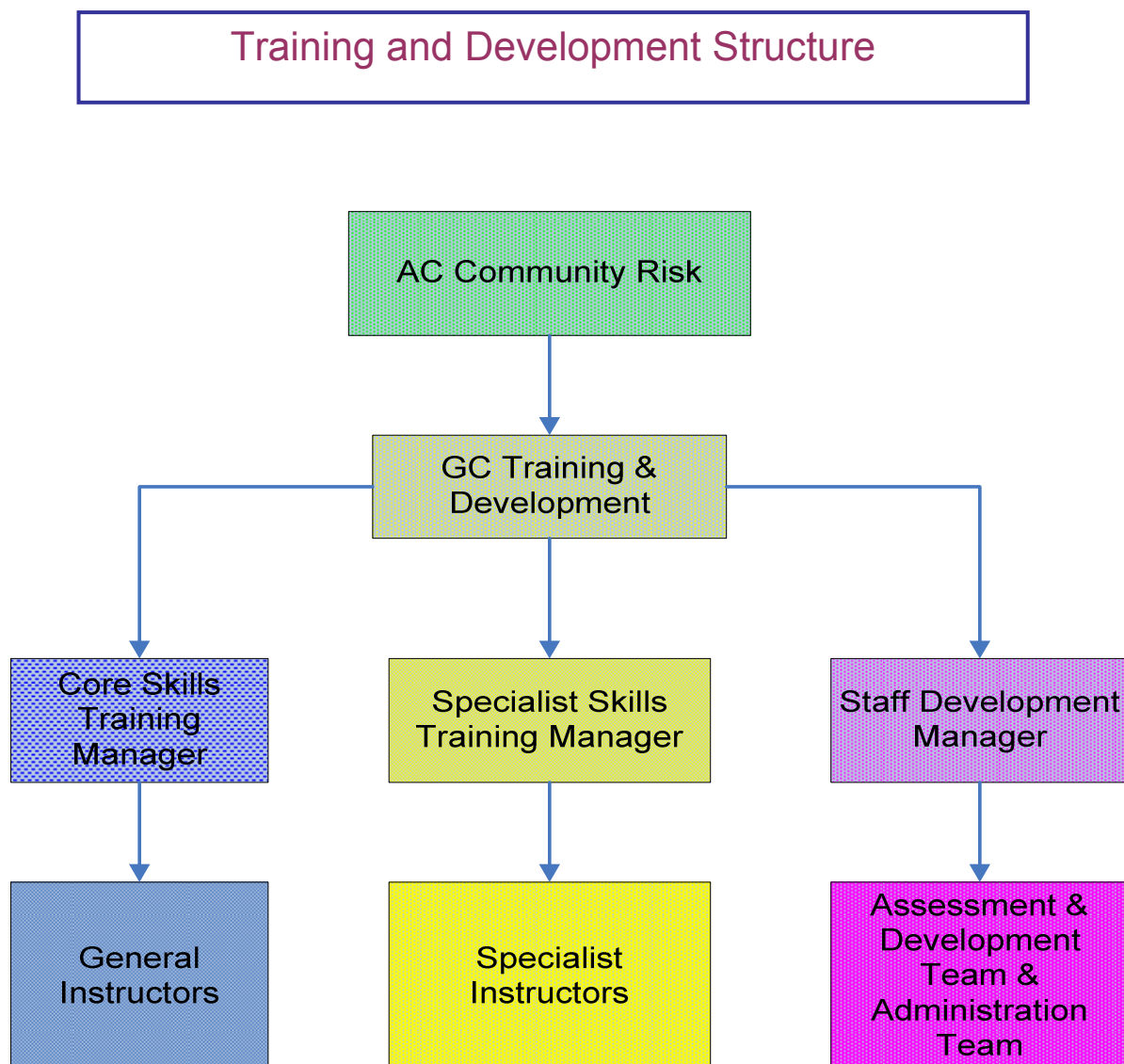
The review has also identified that the existing TDC has outgrown its current site and can no longer address the training requirements of the Service going forward. It is recommended that the Service seek an alternative venue for its TDC at the earliest opportunity. Any new site will need to afford the TDC the space and facilities it requires to deliver the outcomes of this review.

Staffing and Structure of Training and Development

The current TDC structure has been in place for the last three years and no longer represents the most effective way to deliver the training function. To support the findings of this review it is recommended that the Service consider a full restructure of the TDC team including the merging of both TDC and Approved Centre to ensure the efficient and effective running of the department going forward.

A streamlining of training provision will realise significant cost savings. By reallocating administrative tasks currently carried out by Instructors to the administrative team, Instructors should maximise their capacity to deliver training, carry out assessments and quality assure activities.

The proposed new TDC structure is detailed below:



Budget

The TDC budget currently stands at £636,000 per annum with a Training Budget Reserve of £30,000. Despite the proposed changes, this amount will still support the increased levels of training delivery now and in the immediate future.

The review has identified some areas requiring significant investment but also some areas that will provide year on year savings.

Investment

- Building of four STFs to support training Delivery: **£2 million**
- Relocate Training and Development Centre: **Cost to be identified**

Potential Savings

- Amalgamation of Approved Centre and Training Centre and the move away from NVQ: **£143K year on year**
- Reduction of 1 Instructor from TDC: **£35K**

Summary of Recommendations

Table 1 below provides a summary of the headline recommendations for each of the sections covered by the review. The table is colour coded to indicate the status of each recommendation. The table also identifies indicative implementation dates where appropriate and the year in which each objective is to be delivered. Immediate actions relate to April 2011 to March 2012, longer term actions relates to April 2012 to March 2014.

Key

Fully Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
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Table 1

Recommendations	Implementation Status	Priorities
Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation (Section 4)		
Produce strategy and framework document		High
Produce training information notes on all operational subjects.		High
Produce a performance dashboard to collate information on refresher programmes	BA complete	High
Produce Workforce development Strategy		High
Design New Firefighter development programme to replace NVQ	Implement April 1st 2012	High

Design new promotion process to accommodate Firefighter to AC	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Design promotion workbooks for Firefighter to Area Commander	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Individual Development Records, Recording and Competency Systems (Section 5)		
Adopt Redkite as the platform for recording training		High
Review existing Individual Development Record identifying safety critical elements and location specific elements		High
Create new Competency Training Record risk mapped to each Station/Location for all roles	Implement April 1st	High
Current Training Provision (Section 6)		
Initiate a rolling 2 year Operational Training Refresher programme for all Operational Personnel	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Produce a booking system that will be a mirror image for each operational training refresher programme	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Produce a training refresher programme that involves Independent Assessment and Q A process.	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Implement IC refresher programmes for level 1 to level 4 commanders		High
Produce Incident ground safety programme for Station based staff	Implement April 1st 2012	Medium
Cessation of Commercial Training	Implement April 1st 2012	Medium
Deliver free fire safety training courses that help businesses comply with fire safety law.	Longer term objective	low
Consolidate all Driver training requirements in to one department (Driving school)	Longer term objective	Medium
Existing facilities (Section 7)		
Build four STFs, to satisfy Services training requirements	Longer term objective	High
Instructors to utilise Facilities to conduct refresher programmes/ routine training.	Longer term objective	High
Relocate Training Centre to a more suitable location	Longer term objective	Low
Staffing and Structure of Training & Development (Section 8)		
Create a new training and Development Department team structure		High
Disestablish posts in accordance with the Firefighter development programme proposal		High
Adopt revised meeting structure		High