

## **9. HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – CHARTER MARK RESULTS 2008/09**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To update Members on the results of the 2008/09 Charter Mark Assessment for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
2. To inform Members that Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Service has successfully retained its Charter Mark Standard.

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### **Background**

3. Charter Mark, is the UK Government's national standard for excellence in customer service. Charter Mark is a registered certification mark, owned by the Government Communications Group in the Cabinet Office. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have held the Charter Mark badge since 1998.
4. Charter Mark is the Government's national customer service standard for organisations delivering public services. The standard looks at how we ensure our customer service is efficient and effective, and how well we involve stakeholders such as staff, the public and local partners in improving our standards.
5. The Charter Mark Standard consists of six criterions:
  - Set Standards and perform well
  - Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff
  - Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice
  - Continuously develop and improve
  - Use your resources effectively and imaginatively
  - Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve
6. Each of the criterion and their sub elements is individually reviewed and assessed as one of the following:
  - Best Practice – all aspects of the element are met, and the applicant can demonstrate that they have gone beyond the requirements
  - Full compliance – all aspects of the element are met
  - Partial compliance – some but not all aspects of the elements are met and remedial action to meet the remainder could be put in place within a short period of time (maximum of three months)
  - Major non-compliance – none of the requirements of the element are met, or the assessor concludes that remedial action to address these elements that are not met would require a time scale in excess of three months.

## **Assessment Process**

7. As part of the rolling programme a self assessment for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service was submitted to the Cabinet Office on 15 January 2009.
8. A surveillance visit took place between 21 and 22 January 2009 to validate the evidence the Service had submitted as part of our self assessment. The on-site visit involved desktop research to look at the standard of customer service we provide, both where we are performing particularly well and where we may need to improve.

## **Results**

9. The Charter Mark Assessor has confirmed that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have demonstrated that our service delivery complies with the requirements of the Charter Mark Standard for 2008/09. A full report will be sent by the Assessor by no later than Friday 6 February 2009.

## **Best Practice**

10. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service currently have 10 elements identified as national best practice. Two additional elements have now been added to our Best Practice rating. They are:

‘Your arrangements are for the benefit of your customers.’  
‘Your organisation makes the most of available resources.’

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service now have 12 elements identified as national best practice

## **Area for Improvement**

11. There is 1 element that has been identified where we could benefit from further improvement; This is:
  - There are high levels of customer satisfaction, and levels of satisfaction are generally improving

## **Improvement Planning**

12. The results from this assessment will be incorporated into Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service’s Improvement Planning Cycle with proposed action being fed back to Members in due course.

## **Rolling Programme**

13. Our next surveillance visit will take place on or around 15 November 2009.

## **Recommendation**

**The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.**