

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

5. Facing the Future: findings from the Review of Efficiencies and Operations in Fire and Rescue Authorities in England

Purpose of report

1. To consider the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England undertaken by Sir Ken Knight, former Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser to the Government, "Facing the Future" and approve the Authority's response.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Service's response to Facing the Future (attached as Appendix 1), be approved and submitted to the Fire Minister.

Introduction and Background

2. In December 2012, the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, commissioned Sir Ken Knight, the outgoing Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor, to conduct an independent review of efficiencies and operations in Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. His report, 'Facing the Future', was published in May 2013.
3. The terms of reference of the review were broad: to explore the activity of fire and rescue authorities and see what the scope for change might be without reducing the quality of front-line services to the public. It also looked at options for savings both within and beyond the current Spending Review period. Its findings are covered in five broad areas:
 - efficiency in the delivery of fire and rescue services;
 - deploying resources;
 - collaborating for efficiency;
 - driving efficiency; and
 - the future for fire and rescue.
4. In undertaking the review, Sir Ken conducted an examination of previous reviews of the fire and rescue service, prepared an analysis of expenditure and incident data over the last ten years, and held meetings with a number of fire and rescue authorities, representing a diverse geographical and industrial spread and a range of governance types (such as County, Combined and Metropolitan Authorities). Sir Ken also met with representative bodies and took submissions from other fire and rescue authorities and interested parties.
5. While the findings are addressed to the Fire Minister, there is much food for thought for fire and rescue authorities. The report makes no recommendations; rather it suggests that Government and local fire and rescue authorities consider their own

positions against the findings. A formal response by Government to the report will be published in autumn of this year.

Review Findings

6. In the course of five chapters covering the broad areas listed above, the review lists twenty-two key findings.
7. The findings are discussed in more detail in the Appendix to this report, but, in essence they reflect a view that fire and rescue authorities need to look very closely at their own efficiency, at their expenditure against risk and demand, and at their own willingness to transform themselves in the face of reducing financial resources and in the light of opportunities presented in such areas as sharing services and greater collaboration with other agencies, including the potential for mergers.
8. The review reflects that some authorities seem to be better at this than others and that this is an opportune time to share best practice and lessons, particularly those that may lead to greater economies of scale.
9. The areas addressed touch upon many issues that the Authority is already well aware of, and which are of particular significance as it looks to set out its plans for the next few years in the Community Risk Management Plan. For example, some of the issues that the Authority is already addressing and pursuing include innovative flexible crewing and staffing models, joint working with other fire and rescue services and collaboration with other blue-light services, including examining the potential for local merger.
10. The need to drive efficiency is highlighted throughout the report and given the present financial difficulties facing fire and rescue authorities this is understandable. This is an area in which this Authority continues to make significant progress: some £2.5 million revenue savings have been achieved since 2011/12, mostly through the reduction of workforce numbers (including senior and middle management, back office staff and through changes to crewing systems) and by cuts to spending budgets without any noticeable impact on the quality of services delivered for communities. The Authority continues to explore ways in which more can be achieved without affecting frontline services, but there is a limit to how far staff numbers and budgets can keep being cut back before they have to make a visible impact on the frontline.

Next Steps

11. Following the launch of the review, a teleconference with the Fire Minister and Sir Ken was held, in which senior officers of the Fire and Rescue Service participated. During this conference, the Fire Minister encouraged officers and Members to provide him with comments on the report, prior to publishing a formal response during the autumn of this year.
12. Senior officers have carefully considered all aspects of the report and how these relate to the Fire and Rescue Service. The attached Appendix sets out a response to Sir Ken's report.

Conclusion/Summary

13. While the findings are broad-brush in nature and addressed to the fire and rescue service as a whole, they do highlight concerns that all fire and rescue authorities are dealing with, and we can be grateful to Sir Ken for assembling them succinctly in one place and for providing his own considered perspective.
14. The Authority's priority continues to be to deliver a high quality fire and rescue service to people who live in Herefordshire and Worcestershire whilst providing excellent value for money. With the scale of reductions in funding over the next four or more years, the need to pursue greater efficiencies while still delivering a high quality service will remain a considerable challenge.
15. Subject to Member approval, it is proposed that comments in response to Sir Ken's review be sent to the Fire Minister, incorporating feedback from both Authority Members and Service personnel.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Entire Report
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	None directly
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	SMB consultation
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No, not applicable

Supporting Information

Sir Ken Knight's report can be found at the following link: [Facing The Future: Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England](#)

Appendix 1 – Response to Facing The Future

Appendix 2 – Crewing Systems within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

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A response to Facing the Future: findings from the Review of Efficiencies and Operations in Fire and Rescue Authorities in England

Sir Ken Knight's review provides much food for thought for fire and rescue authorities. We appreciate that the findings are broad-brush in nature and addressed to the fire and rescue authorities as a whole, but they do highlight concerns that all fire and rescue authorities are dealing with. We can be grateful to Sir Ken for assembling them succinctly in one place and for providing his own considered perspective.

In the following sections we provide our observations on the review findings, and highlight some areas in which our Authority is making significant progress and which will be of interest to the Fire Minister.

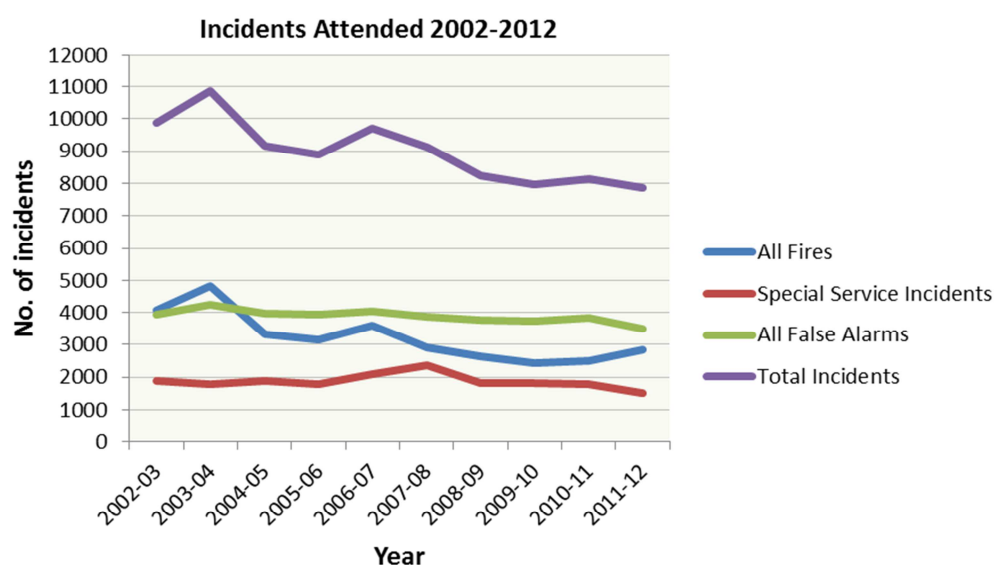
Chapter one: What is efficiency and how efficient is the delivery of fire and rescue services in England?

Key findings from the review

- ❖ *Deaths from fires in the home are at an all time low; incidents have reduced by 40 per cent in the last decade, but expenditure and firefighter numbers remain broadly the same. This suggests that there is room for reconfiguration and efficiencies to better match the service to the current risk and response context.*
- ❖ *Some fire and rescue authorities spend almost twice as much per person per year in some areas than others, but there seems to be little relationship between expenditure and outcomes.*
- ❖ *If all authorities spending more than the average reduced their expenditure to the average, savings could amount to £196 million a year.*

In this section, Sir Ken examines how risks have changed over time and in particular the dramatic fall in the incidence of fire. In our own Service, in the ten years to 2011/12 the number of incidents we've attended has fallen by 20%, and there's been a 30% fall in the number of fires (see figure 1 below). Deaths in accidental dwelling fires also remain very low at around 0.3 per 100,000 population over the last ten years.

Figure 1 – HWFRS Incident trends 2002-2012



The report appreciates the value of the prevention and protection work carried out by Fire and Rescue Services in helping to bring these numbers down, and this Authority is no exception. For instance, our community education and safety work with households, schools and businesses has helped to provide communities with a better understanding about the dangers of fire, water and roads, and we now carry out twice as many home fire safety visits as we did ten years ago and fit almost twice as many smoke alarms in houses.

The report also recognises the increasing shift from what were fire response organisations towards becoming more rounded safety and rescue organisations. This is mirrored in our own Service with the proportion of fire incidents against false alarms and special services falling from over 40% ten years ago to under 30% in 2013/14. However, there also needs to be a recognition of the different starting points of different authorities. Those with the 'worst' performance have the greatest potential for large improvements; those with historic good performance have the least potential for large improvement - this Authority is clearly in the latter yet we have still achieved significant improvements.

Sir Ken considers that there is a dilemma in that while incidents have fallen and risks are reduced, the levels of expenditure and staffing have stayed broadly the same. The review suggests that this is an area where further efficiencies can be made, but accepts that this is an overall observation that will not be true for all fire and rescue services. In our Service, we can certainly point to reductions in wholetime firefighting staff of 23% in the last ten years alone. Although we do not believe that there is a direct connection, it should be noted that this is in line with the reduction in our overall incidents of 20%. It should also be noted that this Service hasn't had primary wholetime crewing for any specialist appliances for many years, yet we understand this practice is still prevalent in some services – this Authority achieved those savings many years before what is now termed 'austerity,' yet appears to be viewed in the same manner as those authorities that are yet to make the same improvements.

Following our review of fire and emergency cover, which is currently underway, we expect more reductions in firefighter numbers, possible up to another 15% of existing numbers. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that firefighters are not only highly qualified and professional response personnel, but they are also fully involved within communities and with partners in promoting prevention, protection and local and national resilience services.

The report then compares how fire and rescue authorities spend their resources and finds variations in expenditure involved in providing broadly the same service. Sir Ken found that costs per head (i.e. per resident) ranged from £26 per year to more than £50. He found that the median or average cost was around £38 per resident per year, and that £196 million could be saved if the higher spending authorities brought their spending down to the average. It is understandable that costs vary (perhaps not by the degree found) due to local factors and in this Authority's case providing adequate fire cover to our sparse population in such a large geographical area certainly costs more than providing cover in a smaller geographical area.

For our Authority and using the same financial year as Sir Ken's analysis, we already provide our services at an average cost of £38 per resident per year. But the government grant per head must also be considered in a rounded discussion on this subject. This Authority received the second lowest grant per head of population at £14.03 per head compared to the average of £20.24, with the highest grant per head being £35.96. Our local council tax payers, on this basis, are subsidising other areas of the country, which is very difficult to understand. On occasions, judgement of financial efficiency is made based upon the level of precept, yet this Authority's precept is set at its current level to make up the short-fall of government grant. Should this Authority receive just the average government grant per head of population, the Authority could reduce its precept by £13.64 (22%) per Band D property and make us one of the lowest precepts in England.

All that being said, this Authority is always seeking avenues for finding further efficiencies to bring costs down, particularly at a time when budgets are under severe pressure. We always remember that as a public service we have a responsibility to make sure we spend every penny wisely, but as an emergency service we have an obligation to keep our communities and firefighters as safe as we can.

Chapter two: Deploying resources

Key findings from the review

- ❖ *Fire and rescue authorities have transformed themselves from organisations that dealt with fire response to organisations also covering preventative and wider rescue work and they have succeeded in reducing incidents. They now need to transform themselves again to reflect the completely different era of risk and demand.*
- ❖ *The focus for the future must be on protecting front-line services; this does not mean a protectionist approach to jobs. Avoiding redundancies, station closures or reductions in fire engines is often the focus for elected members and officers, and there is anecdotal evidence of some self-censorship by Chief Fire Officers.*
- ❖ *Innovative crewing and staffing models are being pursued, and there is some evidence that these are being shared – but there is little evidence of areas implementing learning from others.*
- ❖ *Increasing the total ‘on-call’ firefighters nationally by just 10 percent (to 40 percent) could provide annual savings of up to £123 million. All fire and rescue authorities must consider whether ‘on-call’ firefighters could meet their risk – it is an invaluable cost-effective service.*
- ❖ *£17 million could be saved if authorities adopted the leanest structure in their governance types.*
- ❖ *The Grey Book can lead to some self-limitation by leaders not to introduce change that would require lengthy negotiation. It should be reviewed.*
- ❖ *Authorities are right to capitalise on their reputation to help deliver other services to hard-to-reach communities. But this should only be where they are commissioned to do it, or have identified a clear cost benefit to their own aims.*

This section looks at the opportunities for efficiencies in how Services manage their staff and resources, how prevention work is used to reduce risk and at the wider community role that fire and rescue services play. A key area that Sir Ken focuses on is a seeming reluctance of some authorities to accept that protecting frontline services is not the same as protecting frontline jobs.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority has already made cuts in frontline jobs, and it is highly likely that there will be more cuts to frontline jobs in the coming years. In the current financial climate, it cannot be avoided – natural wastage, frozen recruitment, and cuts away from the frontline will not make up the gap between what the Authority needs in order to deliver its services and what it will have available to do so. However, the Authority is exploring all possible ways to do this and protect frontline services at the same time. For instance, a recent change to the crewing system at Bromsgrove fire station does not change the frontline service we deliver, but it does reduce the number of wholetime firefighters by fifty percent. This is protecting the frontline, but removing jobs.

This chapter highlights a number of case studies regarding how some authorities are exploring ways of targeting risk in ways that improve how their prevention and protection work is delivered. These studies also demonstrate more flexible crewing models, including self-rostering and changes to flexible duty system for officers, which are opening up more effective and efficient ways of providing fire and emergency cover. Other studies highlight the use of volunteers in prevention activity, and how some authorities are increasing the proportion of on-call firefighters and different

types of response vehicles to help to provide a more cost-effective service. This Authority is active in all these areas, but it is worth noting that this Authority has at least one on-call crew at every fire station and that with the forthcoming budget reductions it is highly unlikely that we'll be able to increase any type of firefighting staff. It is more than likely that on-call staff will have to be reduced as well as wholtime staff – there doesn't appear to be an either/or choice in this Authority, which already has very large numbers of on-call firefighters.

These are all areas in which the Service has already made significant advances, and the Authority is able to share its progress with the Fire Minister and with other fire and rescue authorities. Two further examples will also be of interest: the implementation of our new automated false alarm (AFA) policy has led to a significant fall in our attendance at AFAs – a fall of over 20% in one year (2011/12 – 2012/13); and our 'signposting' referral service helps to improve the lives of vulnerable people by creating a gateway for many partner organisations working together in areas such as home safety and security, personal care, and financial and social independence.

Chapter three: Collaborating for efficiency

Key findings from the review

- ❖ *The 46 fire and rescue authorities, each with different governance structures, senior leaders, and organisational and operational quirks does not make for a sensible delivery model. Mergers can be a solution, but there is a lack of local political appetite and incentive to combine.*
- ❖ *There is widespread duplication of effort in the design, commissioning and evaluation of fire-specific products. A greater level of trust between authorities is needed to ensure the rapid spread of good ideas and proven technology.*
- ❖ *The challenge for fire and rescue authorities is to accept that to achieve interoperability, we all need to forgo an element of customisation. What I've seen throughout this review is that fire and rescue authorities are not yet prepared to take this step – but I hope that the future holds greater pragmatism.*
- ❖ *Collaboration, co-responding and co-location with other blue-light services does happen and can deliver efficiency through consolidating public sector assets as well as closer working. But progress is patchy and driven or hindered by local relationships.*

This section looks at opportunities for structural, operational and organisational collaboration between fire and rescue authorities, and at opportunities for fire and rescue to look beyond its borders and collaborate with other blue-light services. The report recognises the difficulties involved, but it sees collaboration as the answer to improving the service, making services interoperable and reducing duplication of spend.

Similar to other fire and rescue authorities, this Authority has explored the potential for collaboration. There have been discussions over recent years between ourselves and neighbouring fire services given the potential synergies and improvements that could be achieved through combination or merger. However, recently there is a strong momentum in the current discussions and, given the additional savings and protection for frontline services that this could achieve, this Authority believes a mutually beneficial merger with another Authority would provide significant benefits in the short, medium and long term.

In terms of operational collaboration, we already have a joint emergency call handling and mobilising project with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, which is already realising cost savings, but also providing an improved and more resilient fire control service. We are also developing our approach to Incident Command with other fire and rescue services to ensure that there is a common collaborative approach to operational incident management. There continues to be a strong collaborative culture in our work with partners in the Local Resilience Forum which is helping to drive further joint working between agencies. A further example, which will be of interest

to the Fire Minister, is our three new locally-based Strategic Training Facilities, which provide firefighters with the opportunity to gain and practice crucial skills in highly realistic conditions. We are seeking opportunities to further enhance this by sharing training expertise and facilities with other fire and rescue services.

The new joint Fire and Police station in Bromsgrove is an excellent example of organisational collaboration that not only brings partners together, but reduces running costs and frees up capital through the sale of surplus property. This partnership with the Police is likely to expand with Police Officers having access to a number of our more rural fire stations and perhaps a permanent base in our fire service headquarters. We continue to explore opportunities to improve the use of public sector assets through our work with partners in Worcestershire's Capital and Asset Pathfinder programme. We have also recently developed a working arrangement with West Midlands Ambulance Service in which they provide trauma instructor courses in return for sharing our training facilities.

Chapter four: Driving efficiency

Key findings from the review

- ❖ *The major driver for change has been reduction in central government funding and the freeze in local council tax revenue. Fire and rescue authorities spend to their budgets, not to their risk. How to use funding to incentivise further change must be a key consideration for government.*
- ❖ *Fire and rescue authority reserves increased from just over £200 million to more than £400 million in 2008-2012. These levels are well above the average for local authorities (including police). Prudent reserves should be held, but funding reductions were backloaded to enable authorities to invest in service transformation – reserves should be used to invest in spend-to-save projects.*
- ❖ *Authority Members need greater support and knowledge to be able to provide the strong leadership necessary to drive efficiency. Scrutiny of authorities and services varies considerably, some more robust than others. Elected Members must ensure that local people understand their service and encourage an informed debate about change.*
- ❖ *Greater sector leadership is needed to drive through a culture of learning from good practice and challenging services to rise to the level of the best.*

This section looks at what is driving efficiency in the provision of fire and rescue services and how it can be further encouraged. It looks in particular at funding issues, accountability and the role of national leaders.

Certainly, the budget challenge following the 2010 Spending Review is having an impact on the Authority as it strives to balance resource against risk. Government grant is reducing, funding from council tax remains static and inflation is rising, and unlike some authorities referred to in Sir Ken's report, we have maintained our reserves at a low but prudent level. When comparing this Authority to Sir Ken's report it should be noted that this Authority has levels of general reserves at only 4% of revenue budget – one of the lowest levels of all Fire Authorities in England. We note that many other fire authorities have levels of reserves way beyond those of this Authority. Nevertheless, we do not believe that solely seeking efficiencies as a result of the funding situation is a sustainable approach. Rather we put the emphasis on improving the services we deliver while also achieving efficiencies. Some areas in which we are doing this have been highlighted in the previous sections.

Our forthcoming Community Risk Management Plan (our term for IRMP), which incorporates our review of fire and emergency cover, is an example of increasing accountability in our Service. Members have been involved throughout its development stages including workshops and seminars with senior managers, so that there is a shared understanding and ownership between

the Authority Members and Service managers. We are also developing an extensive consultation programme that does not just look at the implications of change on the Service as a whole, but also looks at the local impacts in fire station areas and neighbourhoods.

We are strong advocates of peer review. A recent external audit of our operational service delivery gave assurance that the Service's processes were efficient, effective and robust. The team that came to these conclusions was unique amongst those fire authorities that have had an audit in that it contained a local business representative and a member of the local Police; the audit was designed to assist this Authority with collaboration with another Authority. It found that the Service continues to make progress with considerable improvements in many areas and provides good overall performance. It also found some areas that need looking at, which we welcome as an important critical challenge to our overall performance.

Chapter five: What is the future for fire and rescue?

Key findings from the review

- ❖ *Where fire and rescue authorities can provide business cases for local merger, showing clear, achievable efficiencies, central government should step forward to provide financial support for transition.*
- ❖ *The potential savings identified in this review are unlikely to be sufficient for some fire and rescue authorities to be able to live within their reducing budgets.*
- ❖ *The scale of change needed to fully transform the fire and rescue service is unlikely to be achieved through local action alone. But authorities should not wait for national action before fully exploiting the large number of opportunities already within their grasp.*
- ❖ *National level changes to enable greater collaboration with other blue-light services, including through shared governance, co-working and co-location, would unlock further savings.*

The final section of the report concentrates on the future and potential changes to the context in which fire and rescue authorities will operate, and presents a number of possible future operating models. These are interesting ideas worthy of further elaboration and consideration.

We would agree that the fire and rescue service that people see now will not be the same as what they will see in future years. Improved understanding of risk, changes in technology and improvement in training and firefighting techniques will all have a bearing on the future shape of the Service. We also have to bear in mind the changes outside the fire and rescue service that will have an increasing challenge – issues such as the ageing population and the increasing unpredictability in the weather.

For our Fire and Rescue Authority, we will be providing some services differently, and we may need to consider whether it is still appropriate to continue providing others. We are likely to be doing more prevention work within communities through our partner agencies, and we may find it more effective and efficient to combine some of our services with other fire and rescue services, or other organisations may be involved in delivering some of what we currently deliver. As mentioned previously, this Authority is pursuing an agenda that includes a strong potential for merger and, as Sir Ken suggests, we will be challenging government to assist in this quest. There is no doubt in this Authority's view that should the merger agenda be pursued, it could succeed or fail based upon support from central government.

The report notes that the scale of change may require significant national support, and it is welcome to see the recent Government announcement of two new funds to support such change, although their implementation is nearly two years in the future.

As a final thought, we wish to raise the issue of the failure of successive governments to recognise good performance and financial prudence in grant formula settlements. As recognised above, this

Authority has one of the lowest grant settlements per head, has one of the lowest levels of reserves and yet still performs to one of the highest standards. There appears to be no recognition of these facts, especially when it is seen that those authorities at the other end of the spectrum receive similar or often better settlements.

Overall, Sir Ken's report has given this Authority much food for thought and we wish to reiterate that we very much welcome both the contents and the opportunity to comment. We trust that our response will also give government and the Minister more food for thought.

Crewing Systems within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Wholetime (WT)

Fire engines crewed by wholetime crews are available day or night within 90 seconds of the 999 call coming into a station notifying the crew that a fire engine is needed. These staff are full-time employed personnel who work an average of 42 hours per week on a fire station in shifts. There are 4 fire stations which use wholetime crews: Hereford, Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester.

These crews are grouped into Watches (or shifts) called Blue, Green, Red and White.

Retained Duty System, RDS (On-Call)

Fire engines crewed by on-call crews are available within 6 minutes of the alert being sent to the crew. RDS provide cover from their homes or place of work, within 5 minutes of the station. Each station has a pool of usually between 12 and 22 on-call firefighters living or working locally, who provide varying levels of contracted On-Call cover. Aside from emergency calls and essential work, these staff are usually only on station working for approximately 3 hours per week and on some weekends, usually for training. These workers are defined as part-time staff due to their limited time at work, however many of these staff offer up to and in excess of 120 hours On-Call cover per week.

Day-Crewing Plus (DCP)

The wholetime fire engine at Bromsgrove will be crewed using the Day-Crewing Plus system from April 2014. Fire engines crewed using the Day-Crewing Plus system are available within 90 seconds of the alert coming into a station. However, unlike wholetime crewing, Day-Crewing Plus utilises a self rostering system which means the local managers ensure that there are sufficient firefighters available to crew the fire engine from the staff allocated to that station, there is no fixed pattern of shifts. The crew itself works during the 12 hour day period and then remain on station and are available from the station, but not deemed to be working and may undertake personal and leisure activities during this 12 hour period.

Day-Crewed (DC)

Crews working the Day-Crewed system are on station from 8am to 6pm, 7 days a week. During this time they provide the same on-station 90 second response as both Wholetime and Day-Crewing Plus. After 6pm the crew transfer to an On-Call (RDS) system and respond within 5 minutes of the fire station. To achieve this most staff provide a home base near their station, for which they receive an additional allowance in their salary.

This system uses two watches who are available for four 24 hour days on duty, and then have four days leave. This systems operate at Malvern, Evesham and Droitwich & USAR.

Special Vehicles / Special Appliances

Any vehicle not deemed to be a typical large fire engine is referred to as a special appliance. The Fire Service often utilises special equipment or vehicles that it would not be practical or possible to combine with a normal fire engine. Special vehicles are distributed at strategic locations across the Service area, usually on existing fire stations. These include Aerial Appliances, off road vehicles and boats used to deliver the wide range of services Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) provides. These vehicles are not crewed permanently and regarded as “switch” crewed which means the priority is given to the specific vehicle required.

Flexible Duty Systems (Officers Station Commander and above) (FDS)

The Service maintains a team of 28 FDS officers in four shifts of seven providing 24 hour 365 day cover, with seven officers available for immediate call at any time. These officers are all full-time operational employed managers within the Service and have demanding day jobs as well as an additional On-Call commitment from home. Officers will respond day or night immediately and cover a wide geographic area, including deploying to neighbouring Fire Services and nationally when required.

These officers operationally perform an essential command and control and managerial function 24 hours 7 days a week. As the title FDS suggest they also offer “flexible” element to this role and essentially operate a self rostering shift system.

These officers have all entered the Fire Service at Firefighter level and progressed through to officer level, most through Whole Time (WT) employment, but several also through the RDS On-Call career path.

Urban Search and Rescue Function (USAR)

On the same site as the Droitwich the Service provides a complement of 14 wholetime Urban Search and Rescue Technicians. They work the same shift system as the Droitwich day-crewed firefighters, with the significant difference that their On-call (night time) cover is to respond within 30 minutes rather than 5 minutes.

USAR Technicians have the ability and skills to be able to support and stabilise large objects (buildings or vehicles); gain entry through confined spaces or via rope access (up or down); to work on and in water; and break into or cut materials (concrete or steel) to effect rescues or make safe an unstable structure. These USAR trained staff understand they may be deployed anywhere nationally for up to, and in excess of seven days, and will usually work under arduous and poor conditions for extended periods of time with limited support.

As well as the national and regional role for major disasters, the USAR capability is utilised within HWFRS to support normal operations including Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) involving large vehicles, or fires and RTCs where vehicles or buildings have become












































unstable. USAR also provide internal resilience for Rope Rescue and Water Rescue functions as these skills also form part of the skillset held by USAR trained Technicians.





UK National Resilience

The Government's aim is to reduce risk from emergencies so that people can go about their business freely and to make sure the United Kingdom is equipped to deal with major emergencies, like natural disasters or terror attacks. Since 2001, the Department for Communities and Local Government has made considerable investment through its Fire and Resilience Programme to increase resilience and enhance the capabilities of the UK Fire and Rescue Service to improve emergency preparedness. Whilst all the assets and vehicles were originally purchased and owned by the Government through the National Resilience programme, ownership of these assets was subsequently transferred to individual Fire Authorities.

The National Resilience Programme consists of a number of distinct capabilities, including units for dealing with Chemical, Biological, Radiological contamination; Detection Identification and Monitoring (DIM) of Hazardous substances; Urban Search and Rescue (USAR); Water and High Volume Pumping (HVP); and Command and Control, Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) for large incidents.

HWFRS - current arrangement of Fire Engines at Fire Stations

Fire Stations with 3 fire engines		Fire Stations with 2 fire engines		Fire Stations with 1 fire engine	
Hereford	  	Bromsgrove	 	Bewdley	
Redditch	  	Bromyard	 	Broadway	
Worcester	  	Droitwich Spa	 	Eardisley	
		Evesham	 	Ewyas Harold	
		Kidderminster	 	Fownhope	
		Ledbury	 	Kingsland	
		Leominster	 	Kington	
		Malvern	 	Leintwardine	
		Ross-on-Wye	 	Pebworth	
		Tenbury Wells	 	Pershore	
				Peterchurch	
				Stourport	
				Upton	
				Whitchurch	

Key:  = Wholtime (Retained)  = Daytime  = Day Crewing Pl  = Day Crewing = On-Call