



HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## **2011-12 IRMP Annual Action Plan Consultation**

### **Feedback, Analysis and Recommendations**

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# 1. Introduction

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2009/12 sets out a broad set of strategic objectives to realign our available resources to the areas of greatest risk within our community. We consider these risks and identify initiatives to reduce risk and improve community safety. As part of the IRMP process, Fire and Rescue Services are required to produce annual action plans which set out each year's priorities as part of this plan.

During the 12 weeks from 28 June to 20 September 2010, the Authority consulted a wide variety of individuals, groups and partnerships from across the two counties to get their views on the proposals outlined in the 2011/12 IRMP Action Plan.

This paper summarises the feedback received from all sources, linking it to each of the proposals. Clearly the scale and diverse nature of responses means that the summary is not exhaustive, but does include all those comments or suggestions which were shared by several respondents. Key themes have been developed for each recommendation within which such comments can sit. From these, Action Plan recommendations have been proposed for formal adoption or reconsideration reflecting consultation feedback, or inclusion in implementation plans as appropriate.

Additionally many comments were not specific to the proposals outlined but were aimed at the consultation process generally and these are captured in sections 3 – 5.

## ***Methodology for consultation***

The IRMP Action Plan consultation was approved by the Authority and the proposals were distributed amongst stakeholders (statutory and voluntary sector agencies; community organisations; specialist agencies e.g. Fire Protection Association; multi-agency partnerships; etc). In addition to this a range of focus groups and open day events were attended. Focus groups targeted staff groups and representative bodies and the Annual Action Plan proposals were also hosted on the Service's website.

The consultation was also accessible through Worcestershire County Council's public access portal and a small number of responses were received through that mechanism as well.

The individual responses received, coupled with the feedback from the focus groups and any detailed written responses have informed the key themes in response to the IRMP proposals.

Eighty five anonymous responses were received, directly responding to the questionnaire provided with the plan. One detailed written response was received from the Fire Brigades' Union.

## ***Summary of Recommendations for Consultation***

### **Recommendation 1**

***During 2011/12 we will conduct a review of the impact of the recent changes in Technical Fire Safety arrangements to ensure that the anticipated benefits are being fully realised***

### **Recommendation 2**

***We will review the allocation of our community safety resources to ensure the best fit of activities to risk. This will maximise our ability to reduce risk in our communities***

### **Recommendation 3**

***We will reduce our attendance at AFAs through a review of our policies and procedures and the implementation of our findings***

### **Recommendation 4**

***We will review our fire cover and response arrangements with a focus on:***

- ***The requirement for a third appliance at Hereford, Worcester and Redditch***
- ***The current crewing arrangements at Bromsgrove.***
- ***The appropriate number of personnel on each watch at wholetime and day crewed stations***

### **Recommendation 5**

***We will ensure our Property Strategy is fully aligned to our IRMP proposals including Recommendation No.4 and other aspects of Service Delivery, such as the provision of effective operational training***

### **Recommendation 6**

***We will consider our current operational training strategy and provision to identify any potential for improvement in both effectiveness and efficiency, and implement any appropriate changes***

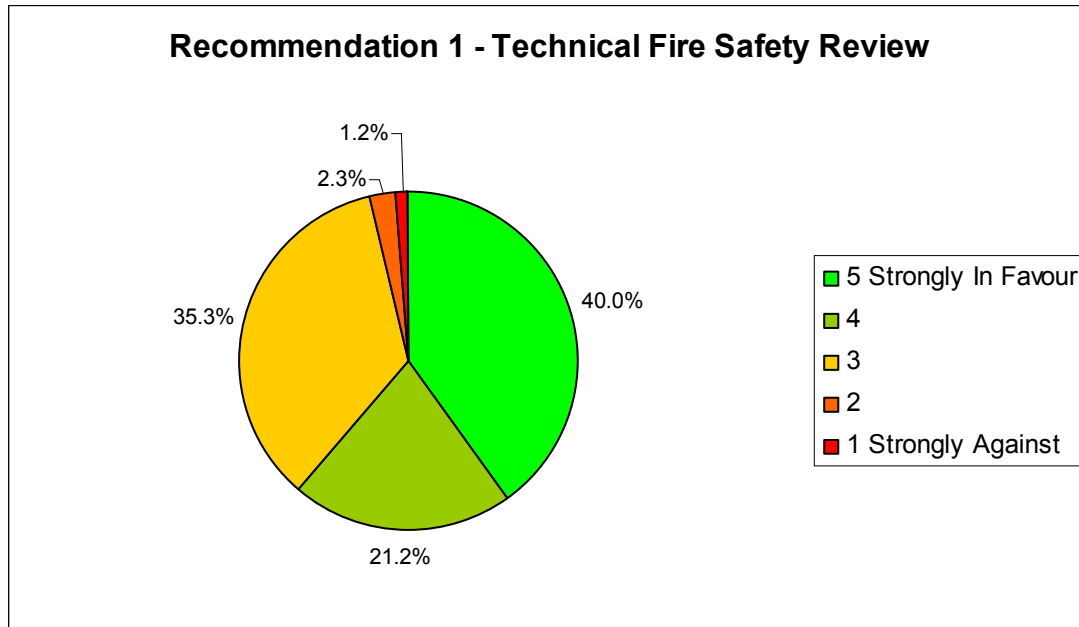
### **Recommendation 7**

***We will review our approach to environmental issues to ensure that we are maximising the potential partnership working in this area, reducing our energy usage and identifying further opportunities for cost efficiency***

## 2. Summary of feedback

### Recommendation 1

*During 2011/12 we will conduct a review of the impact of the recent changes in Technical Fire Safety arrangements to ensure that the anticipated benefits are being fully realised*



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 1	34	18	30	2	1	85

**61.2% of respondents agreed with this proposal and only 3.5% disagreed.**

### Key Themes

There was strong overall agreement with this proposal with the prevailing view being that the Service should build upon and enhance the improvements already made to maximise the potential benefits.

Concern was expressed about the lack of information provided to explain what the anticipated benefits of the recent changes in TFS arrangements actually were.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

It was suggested that many retired fire officers are undertaking fire risk assessment and that the Service could undertake this for a fee, thereby generating a source of income and offsetting budget cuts\*.

It was also suggested that consideration should be given to a strategy for sprinkler promotion, incorporating developments with sprinklers in staircases.

Consideration should also be given to providing information on the impact of changes in TFS arrangements during the review process.

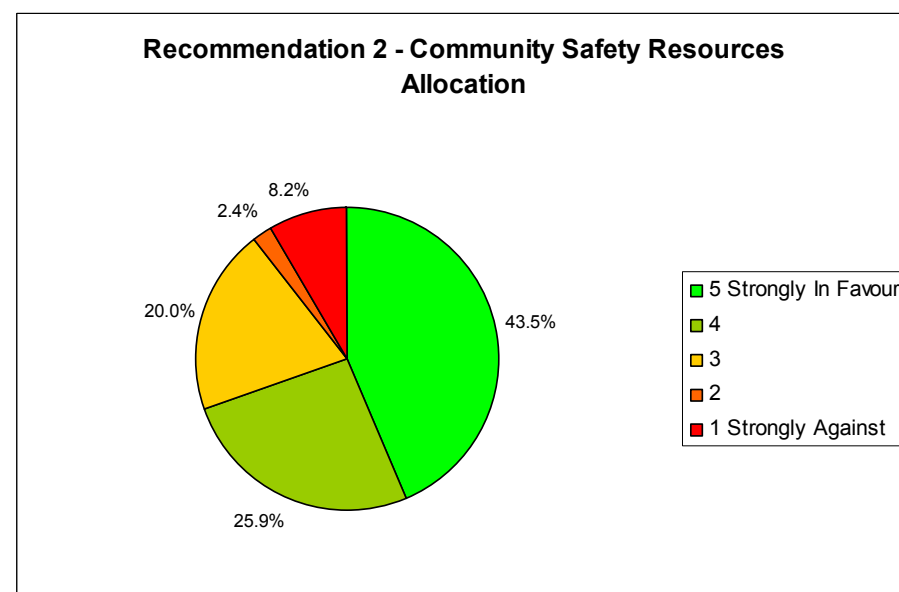
The FRS is statutorily responsible for auditing and enforcing fire risk assessments, which means it would not be appropriate to conduct them

### Proposed Recommendation

**This recommendation is adopted**

## Recommendation 2

***We will review the allocation of our community safety resources to ensure the best fit of activities to risk. This will maximise our ability to reduce risk in our communities***



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 2	37	22	17	2	7	85

**69.4% of respondents agreed with this proposal and only 10.6% disagreed.**

### Key Themes

There was strong agreement with this proposal with a clear message that we should focus our limited resources on the most 'at risk' community groups where most impact can be achieved. Some responses questioned why we were not already optimising our efforts through a systematic improvement process.

A number of inputs expressed the opinion that less operational crew time should be allocated to community work and instead reallocated to operational readiness/training.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

The work on road safety should continue.

Consideration should be given to the option for using RDS staff for these duties in their local community.

A view was expressed that data and guidance provided to stations could be improved and that it is important to measure how effective specific community safety activities are.

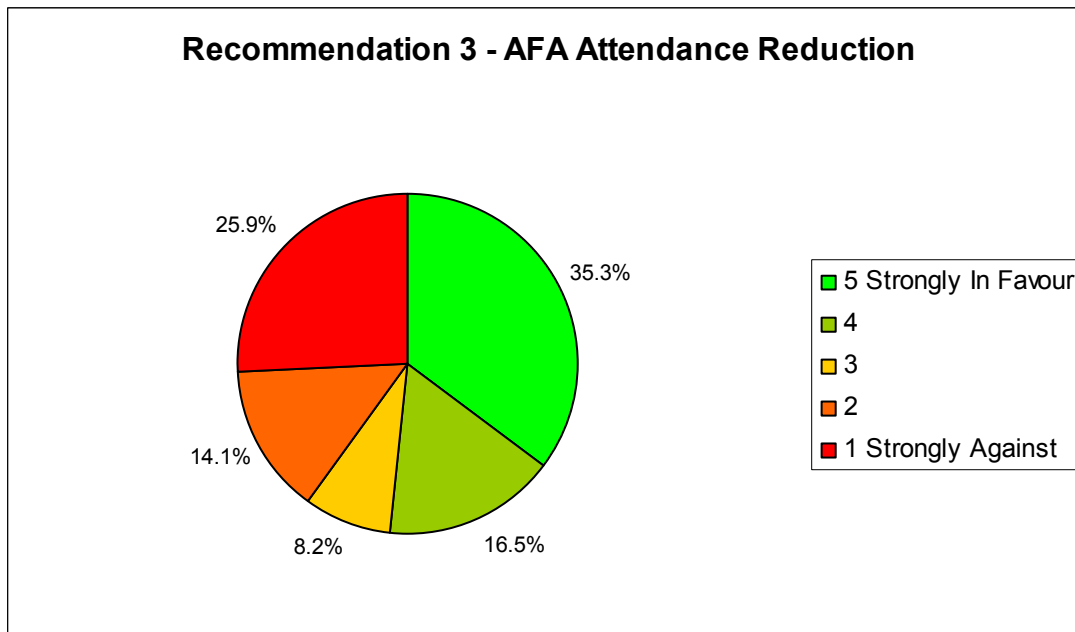
In line with this, it may be useful to examine how data and guidance is used to inform targeted community safety activity.

### Proposed Recommendation

**This recommendation is adopted**

### Recommendation 3

*We will reduce our attendance at AFAs through a review of our policies and procedures and the implementation of our findings*



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 3	30	14	7	12	22	85

**51.8% of respondents agreed with this proposal and 40.0% disagreed.**

### Key Themes

More than half of all respondents agreed with this proposal although 40% did not. Those in favour were clear that attendance on this scale to false alarms caused by AFAs was an unacceptable waste of resources that could instead be allocated to real service priorities. The vast majority of those that were not in favour were concerned about the fact that some AFAs did turn out to be real fires and that if not mobilised correctly, would lead to unnecessary deaths, injuries and levels of fire damage.

A significant number of respondents were of the view that management of AFAs was the responsibility of the building owner and that repeat offenders should be charged with the costs of attendance.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

Special attention should be paid to the 50 premises that generate 40% of repeat AFA attendances.

A risk based analysis may lead to increased attendance for some AFAs based upon the specific property risk profile\*.

Some confusion was highlighted with the wording of the background statistics and the summary recommendation itself.

## Proposed Recommendations

**This recommendation is amended and approved as follows:**

Modify the wording of the proposal as follows:

**"We will reduce our attendance at false alarms caused by AFAs after a review of our policies and procedures and the implementation of our findings."**

- Reword the background information to clarify which figures refer to calls and which figures refer to incidents attended e.g. "The Service attends over 2700 incidents a year to automatic fire alarms (AFA) that turn out to be false alarms; this is approximately one third of all incidents attended by the Service."
- Confirm that review and implementation will use a risk based approach.
- Ensure that the 50 premises identified are addressed as a priority.

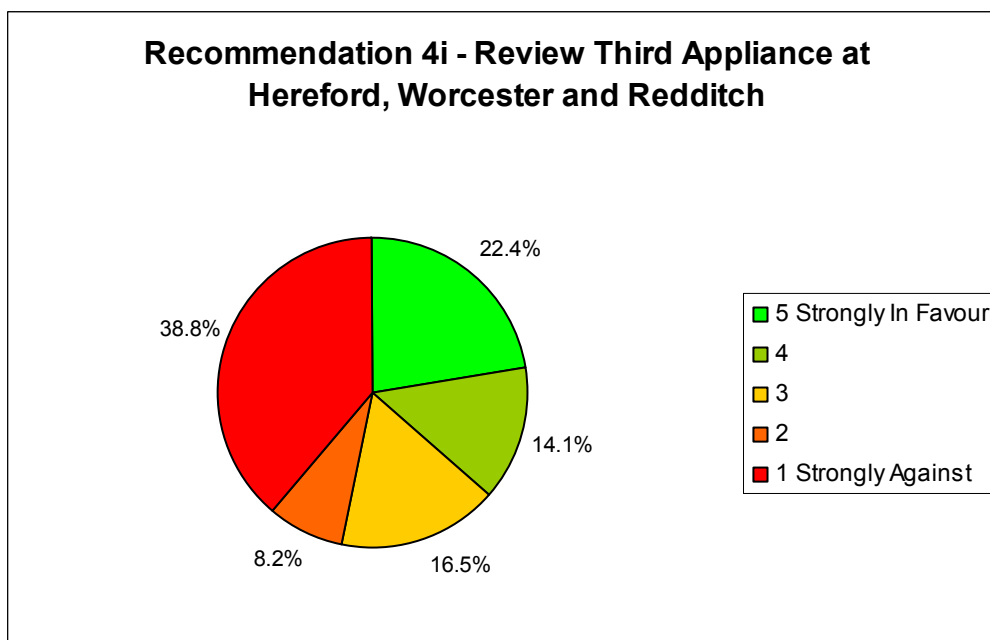
*\*Charging for AFA attendance is currently unlawful, and cannot be considered as a viable option.*



## Recommendation 4

**We will review our fire cover and response arrangements with a focus on:**

- i. The requirement for a third appliance at Hereford, Worcester and Redditch**
- ii. The current crewing arrangements at Bromsgrove**
- iii. The appropriate number of personnel on each watch at wholetime and day crewed stations**



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 4i	19	12	14	7	33	85

**36.5% of respondents agreed with this proposal and 47.0% disagreed, with 38.8% disagreeing strongly.**

### Key Themes

This proposal was not supported overall by respondents, with 47% against and 36.5% in favour. The overwhelming concern was that any reduction in the number of pumping appliances and associated personnel would lead to a degradation of service and increased risk to the public and firefighters. A number of respondents believed that we already rely too much on the resilience register to maintain crewing levels.

Those in favour believed that the Service must ensure that the resources deployed are optimum in order to maintain our levels of service to the public in the most effective way possible and that a review was therefore justified.

A significant number of respondents found the wording of the summary recommendation ambiguous or confusing, not understanding whether it was referring to three appliances overall or the 3<sup>rd</sup> pump specifically.

A number of responses identified Hereford station as needing particular consideration due to its geographic location and absence of nearby wholetime or day crewed stations.

There was also a view that the 3<sup>rd</sup> pump is critical in ensuring appliances are kept on the run when specialist appliances are deployed as no longer primary crewed.

## Consultation Comments/Suggestions

At all 3 pump stations make one pump wholetime with the second and third retained.

Health and safety requirements must be satisfied for any proposed changes.

### Proposed Recommendations

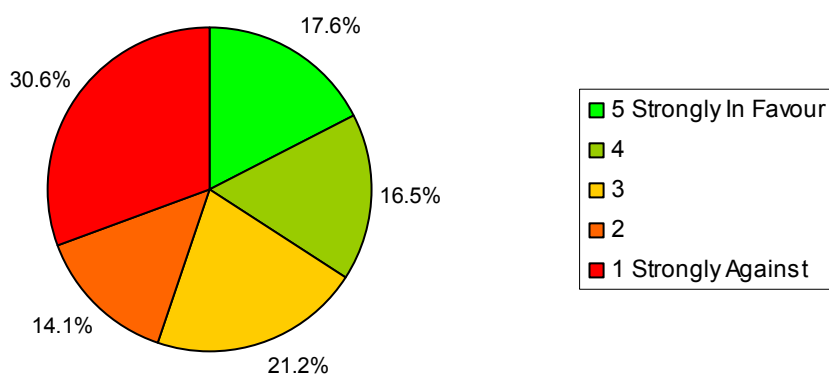
**This recommendation is amended and approved as follows:**

Modify the wording of the proposal as follows:

**"We will review our fire cover and response arrangements with a focus on the continued requirement for three pumping appliances at Hereford, Worcester and Redditch."**

- Take account of concerns that firefighter safety will be paramount and any potential changes in the establishment would be safe.
- Confirm that any outcomes of the review will be the subject of further consultation.

### Recommendation 4ii - Review Current Crewing Arrangements at Bromsgrove



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 4ii	15	14	18	12	26	85

**34.1% of respondents agreed with this proposal and 44.7% disagreed, with 30.6% disagreeing strongly. 21.2% did not have an opinion either way.**

### Key Themes

This proposal was not supported overall by respondents and showed a similar profile to recommendation 4i), with 44.7% against and 55.3% either in favour or not having an opinion either way.

The arguments against were identical to those expressed in recommendation 4i), particularly with respect to firefighter safety and some respondents queried why this proposal was being made

now when Bromsgrove moved to shift cover only a couple of years ago. ( Bromsgrove moved from day crewed to WT in 1997.)

Those in favour were of the opinion that Bromsgrove should never have moved from day crewed to wholetime.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

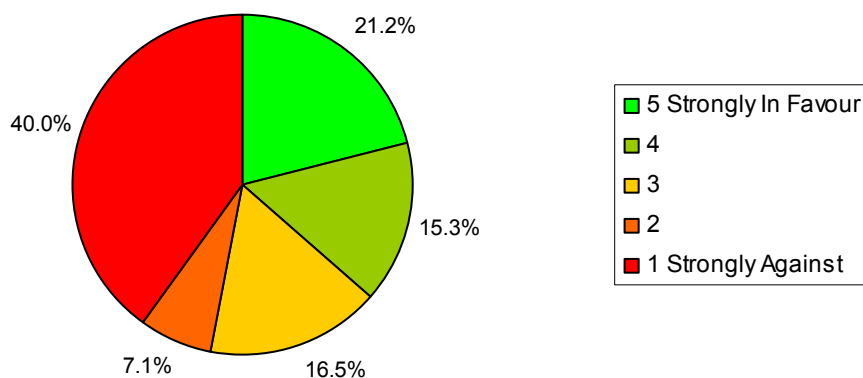
Several respondents felt that the proposals 4i), 4ii) and 4iii) should be considered collectively (holistically) as well as individually.

### Proposed Recommendations

**This recommendation is approved, with the following considerations:**

- Take account of concerns that firefighter safety will be paramount and that any potential changes in the establishment would be safe.
- Confirm that any outcomes of the review will be the subject of further consultation.

**Recommendation 4iii - Review Number of Personnel on each watch at Wholetime and Day Crewed Stations**



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 4iii	18	13	14	6	34	85

**36.5% of respondents agreed with this proposal and 47.1% disagreed, with 40.0% disagreeing strongly.**

### Key Themes

This proposal was not supported overall by respondents and showed an almost identical profile to recommendation 4i), with 47.1% against and 36.5% in favour. Again, the reasons for and against were the same as for recommendation 4i).

Questions were raised why we were apparently revisiting arrangements at day crewed stations when this was the subject of a specific initiative within the 2010-11 IRMP Action Plan.

## **Consultation Comments/Suggestions**

Increase RDS representation and decrease wholetime as the 'watch' format is no longer sound or fit for purpose in the current financial climate

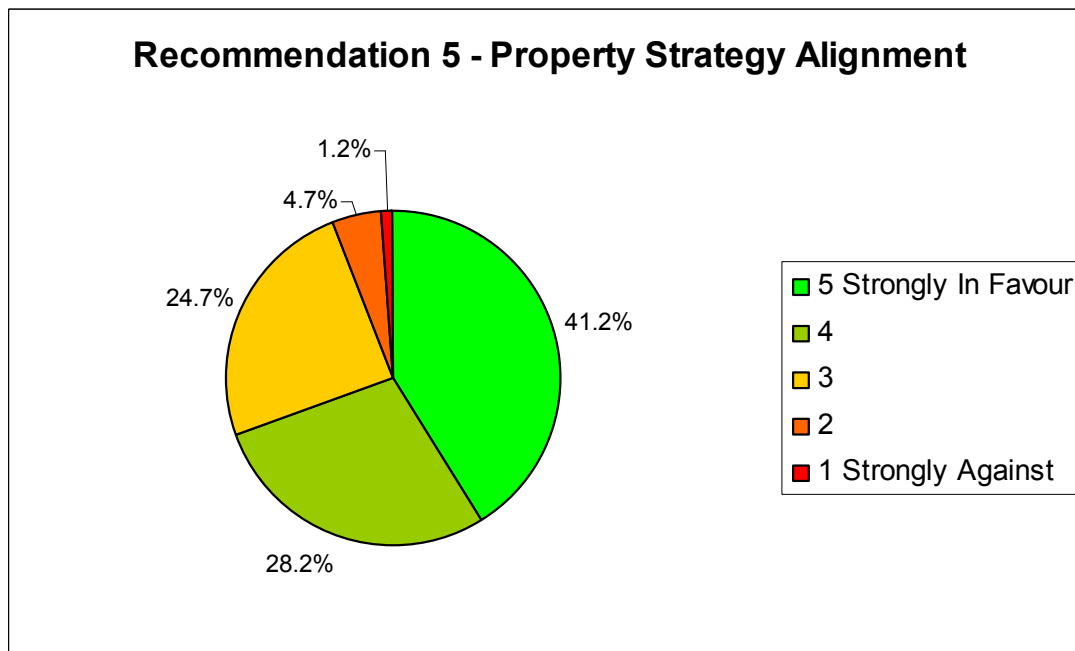
### **Proposed Recommendations**

**This recommendation is approved, with the following considerations:**

- Take account of concerns that firefighter safety will be paramount and that any potential changes in the establishment would be safe.
- Confirm that any outcomes of the review will be the subject of further consultation.

## Recommendation 5

***We will ensure our Property Strategy is fully aligned to our IRMP proposals including Recommendation No.4 and other aspects of Service Delivery, such as the provision of effective operational training***



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 5	35	24	21	4	1	85

**69.4% of respondents agreed with this proposal and only 5.9% disagreed.**

### Key Themes

There was strong overall agreement with this proposal with the clear view that available resources should be clearly targeted to the operational service needs of the organisation. Within this, the Service should strive to provide quality properties which provide suitable training facilities and enhance the morale of the workforce, making them feel valued.

A significant number of respondents felt that insufficient investment had been made in stations over a prolonged period of time and that too many properties were now in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

More attention should be paid to the environmental impact of our properties.

Consideration should be given to sharing facilities with partners and embracing the property needs of all public services (Total Place).

Specialist departments should not be co-located with partner organisations as this would reduce their value/effectiveness when in fact they need to be more integrated with districts and stations.

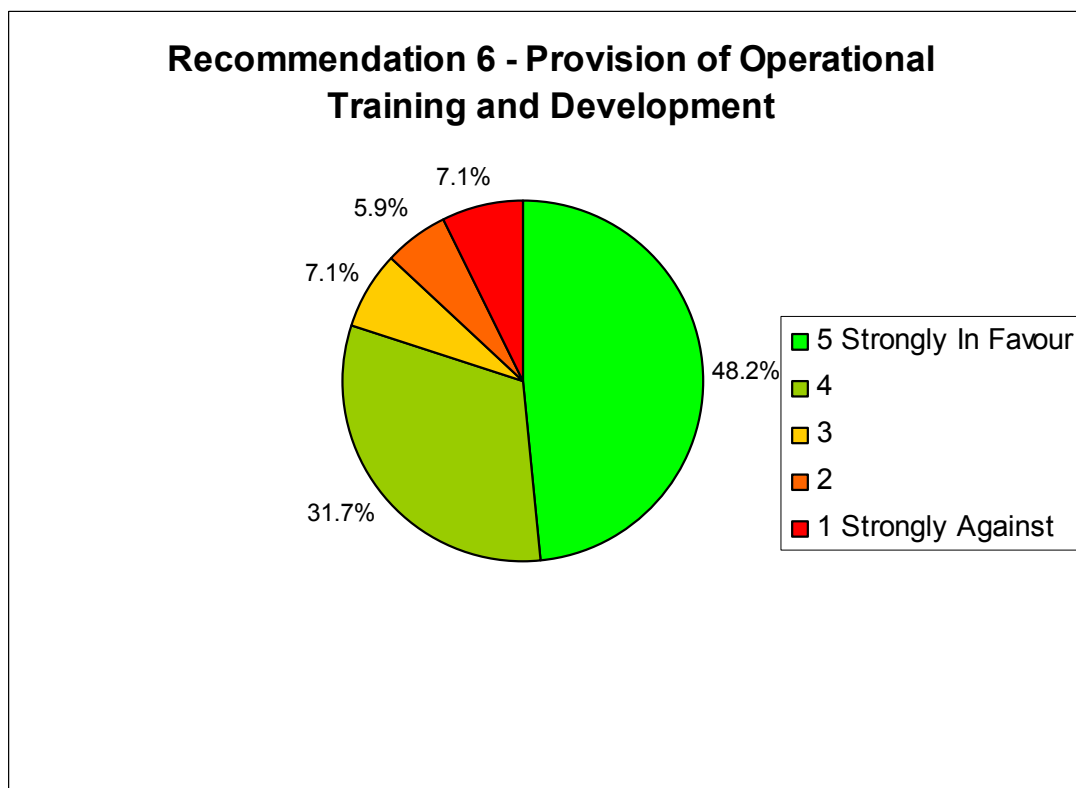
We should look at female and disabled facilities.

### Proposed Recommendation

**This recommendation is adopted**

## Recommendation 6

***We will consider our current operational training strategy and provision to identify any potential for improvement in both effectiveness and efficiency, and implement any appropriate changes***



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 6	41	27	6	5	6	85

**79.9% of respondents agreed with this proposal and only 13.0% disagreed.**

### Key Themes

There was overwhelming support for this proposal with 79.9% in favour.

A significant number of respondents felt that the NVQ process was too time consuming (particularly for RDS staff), was too general and was applied in a broad brush manner – “qualified and competent is not the same thing”.

A number of inputs suggested that the ADC process needed to be changed as it did not provide the best managers and discouraged promotion.

Several responses believed that there was opportunity to improve value for money within operational training.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

Consideration needs to be given to any health and safety implications before any proposed changes are implemented.

The impact on staff employment contracts should be considered if the way training is delivered is changed.

This is only one part of a more fundamental issue – until we put the correct people in the correct roles with the correct competencies and experience, we cannot become effective.

More realistic training is required to reflect real world situations.

Training facilities need to be spread across the two counties to reduce wasted travel time.

The current ICT training support framework is not fit for purpose.

There is currently no mechanism for maintaining competency in water training.

IPDRs need to be carried out earlier to ensure courses can be planned within the year.

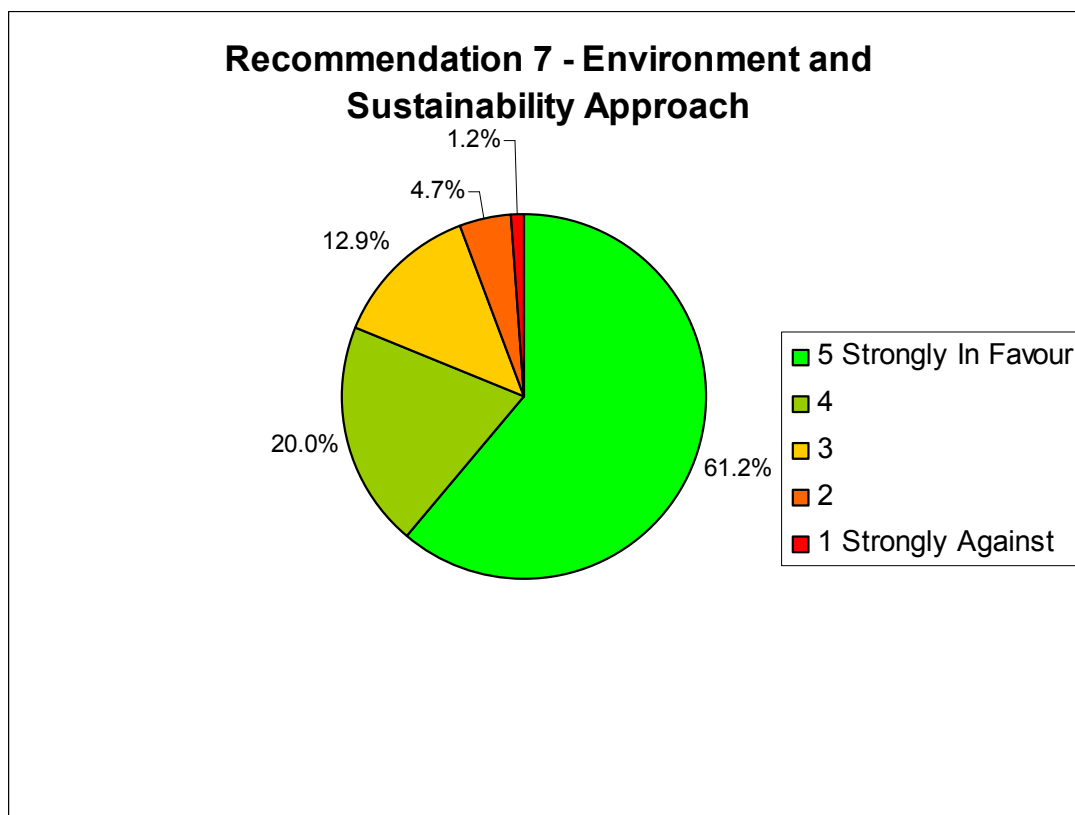
Consideration should also be given to non-uniformed training requirements which are also important.

<b>Proposed Recommendation</b>
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<b>This recommendation is adopted</b>
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## Recommendation 7

*We will review our approach to environmental issues to ensure that we are maximising the potential partnership working in this area, reducing our energy usage and identifying further opportunities for cost efficiency*



Summary of Written Responses	5 Strongly In Favour	4	3	2	1 Strongly Against	Total responses
Recommendation 7	52	17	11	4	1	85

**61.2% of respondents agreed strongly with this proposal and only 5.9% disagreed.**

### Key Themes

This proposal was clearly regarded as a good idea, with 81.2% in favour and only 5.9% against. The overwhelming sentiment was that there was an obligation on the Service to play its part in supporting environmental sustainability.

Some respondents were concerned that money might be spent on environmental matters which could be better allocated to delivery of services.

A number of responses considered that fire stations wasted energy or were not inherently energy efficient.

### Consultation Comments/Suggestions

It was felt important that clear performance indicators and targets were assigned to any implementation of this proposal to ensure that progress was objectively measured.

Concern was raised that we were not being sufficiently aggressive in our commitment to support environmental sustainability.

A further concern was whether the Service would be constrained in the short term from making the necessary investments that would deliver benefits in the longer term.

Consider motion sensors in more areas of properties and heat isolation for winter transition.



Install a separate air conditioning system for the ICT servers – this would initially be expensive but would soon pay for itself through not having to be switched on in the rest of the building.

The Service should work with local community action groups that are part of the 'Big Society' approach.

<b>Proposed Recommendation</b>
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<b>This recommendation is adopted</b>
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### 3. Other Written Responses

**The Fire Brigades Union** provided a detailed response to all FRA members which addressed each IRMP Action Plan recommendation and these responses have been incorporated into the key themes under each recommendation.

In summary:

Recommendation 1: *“...we welcome the proposed review as an opportunity to demonstrate the improvements that have been, and continue to be achieved.”*

Recommendation 2: *“There is a prejudged outcome in this recommendation that the review will maximise the ability to reduce risk in our communities.”*

Recommendation 3: *“The statement...‘we will reduce’ is prejudging the review which if risk based may lead to an increased attendance on some AFAs (sic) based on the property risk profile.”*

Recommendation 4: *“Our main concerns ... are that the wording of the recommendation is ambiguous, and wholly misleading.”*

Recommendation 5: *“[FBU] welcomes any deliverable strategy that will give ... the kind of working environments that is enjoyed by those who work in recently bought modern up to date buildings.”*

Recommendation 6: *“...the Operational Training Strategy ... does not currently exist...”*

*“...how does the Service intend to review a (sic) Operational Training Strategy that is not available and then implement any appropriate changes?”*

Recommendation 7: *“...this recommendation does not suffer the lip service that these issues have fallen foul of else where...”*

The FBU also provided more generic comments on the consultation process, focusing on the effective length of this year's consultation period, the ability of the public to understand and respond to the consultation process as well as its accessibility.

There was also a request from the FBU for it to provide input into the scope and terms of any review; to have an involvement with the review itself; and early access to the outcomes of any review undertaken.

## 4. Additional Comments from Focus Groups and Feedback Forms

### General Comments not incorporated into Recommendation Key Themes

Comment	Response
The most frequently repeated sentiment was that the wording of the proposals was either ambiguous, contained too much Fire Service jargon or provided insufficient information to enable the responder to make an informed judgement.	The IRMP Action Plan consultation contained a high level summary of proposals. The Authority aims to provide clarity of information from which those consulted can respond. This requires a balance of information between detail and concise proposals. Comments made on how this can be improved will be considered, including links to other Authority documents where appropriate.
A recurring consultation response centred on the process being a paper exercise just to satisfy IRMP guidelines and not able to influence decisions because the outcomes are predetermined.	The FRA regards consultation as a critical element of the IRMP process. Consultation responses are evaluated and are incorporated into proposals where appropriate. Feedback has resulted in changes being made to previous IRMP proposals and will again be fully considered as part of the 2011-12 Action Plan process.
A number of comments suggested that some of the proposals are cost management initiatives dressed up as risk management initiatives. This observation was often linked with a caution that we must never lose sight of our responsibility to respond to emergencies to help people in trouble.	The proposals are not driven by budget challenges. However, at the heart of IRMP processes is the balancing of risk against available resources. Resource availability is a critical factor determining the Authority's ability to make changes and improvements.
There were views that these proposals will have no actual measurable outcomes and nothing has or will change. There just seems to be review upon review upon review.	Each proposal, once approved, will be developed with a clear scope and terms of reference. Clear outcomes will be identified, including milestones, which will be measured through our normal performance systems to ensure effective delivery.
Concern was expressed that some departments were not aware of proposals that affected their area of responsibility before they were submitted to the Authority.	The FRA is responsible for determining our strategic plans and approving major Service initiatives. It is therefore felt appropriate to engage on such issues with Members of the FRA and to seek their guidance before communicating more widely within the organisation.  Detailed business objectives will still need to be developed for each proposal that is approved and departmental representatives will be responsible for this task through the established planning process.