

## **Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Director of Protection**

### **Update from the Joint Consultative Committee**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform and allow the Committee to scrutinise the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since the last update provided on 9 July 2025.
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#### **Recommendation**

***It is recommended that the following new and existing items currently under discussion by the Joint Consultative Committee be noted:***

- (i) HMICFRS Inspection Update***
- (ii) Community Risk Management Plan Update***
- (iii) Policies (noted and discussed)***
- (iv) Property Update***
- (v) Projects Update***
- (vi) Efficiencies Update***

#### **Background**

2. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) acts as the main route for formal employee consultation. It consists of managers and employee representatives who meet every six weeks to discuss issues of mutual interest. The JCC is not a decision-making body.
3. Employees are represented on JCC by members from each of the Representative Bodies (RBs) in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, namely; Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Fire Officers Association (FOA), Fire & Rescue Services Association (FRSA), and Unison.
4. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer who is currently responsible for industrial relations. Other management representatives include the Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Prevention, Assistant Directors / Area Commanders responsible for Protection, Prevention, Response and Assets, as well as the Head of HR and Development. The ACO will chair JCC in the absence of the ACFO.

## **Update**

5. The Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations Service Policy and Instruction (SPI) provides the framework for communicating, consulting and negotiating with all Trade Unions.
6. All new items raised at JCC meetings are now categorised under one of the following headings thus enabling a more structured flow of information between management and representative bodies:
  - Items for consultation,
  - Items for negotiation,
  - Service Policy and Instructions (SPI) undergoing formal consultation,
  - Service Policy and Instructions (SPI) undergoing Minor Amendments,
  - Items for information / updates for Trade Union representatives,
  - Requests for information / issues raised by Trade Union representatives,
  - Other items / general updates including budgets, and
  - Fire Authority agenda items of note.
7. The JCC has met on 3 occasions since the previous update delivered to the Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025, these being on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025, and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025. A further meeting is scheduled to take place on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025, and six weekly meetings have been scheduled throughout 2026.
8. Recent JCC meetings have received updates concerning the Service's HMICFRS Inspection Programme, updates presented to the Fire Authority, including; outcomes from the public consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Plan, and discussions on future budgets and efficiencies. No new items have been raised by representative bodies other than those already under discussion.

## **New issues under discussion since the last update**

### HMICFRS

9. At each JCC meeting members are provided with an update regarding progress and relevant details concerning His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This covers the 11 Areas for Improvement (AFI) highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report and the 32 actions set out by the Service that will address the AFIs. At the JCC meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025 a presentation was delivered by the Service Improvement Manager which detailed the next HMICFRS inspection commencing in early 2026.

### Community Risk Management Plan

10. JCC members were given an overview of the draft CRMP public consultation that was undertaken between 13 January and 7 April 2025. Officers provided members with detail that showed the majority of respondents were in favour of the proposals put forward either 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with areas across Risk, Response, Prevention and Protection.

## Policies

11. Policies discussed or noted at JCC since the previous update have included:

- Redundancy v6.00
- The Management and Maintenance of Work Equipment v3.02
- Neonatal Care Leave v1.0
- Safety Event Investigation and Reporting Procedure v8.01
- Change Control Policy v3.04
- Data Backup and Restore Policy v2.04
- Encryption Policy v2.04
- ICT Acceptable Use v2.05
- ICT Security Policy Framework v2.04
- Patch Management Policy v2.14
- Wireless Network Policy v2.04
- Fire Safety Intervention Scheme Policy v3.0
- Business continuity Recovery Framework
- Shared Parental Leave v4.0
- Email Acceptable Use Policy v1.04
- Information Risk Policy v1.04
- Password Policy v1.04
- Remote Working Policy v1.04
- Register of Staff Interests Policy v2.05
- Overarching Governance Policy v2.01
- 7 Day Flexi-time System 42 Hour Day Duty Employees v4.04
- Annual Leave and Entitlement Procedures v11.06
- Data Protection v7.09
- Freedom of Information Act Environmental Information Regulation v3.03
- Overarching Information Governance Policy v2.02
- Overarching Information Sharing Protocol v1.03
- Records Management Policy v2.04
- High Threat Policy and Major Incidents

## Property Update

12. A brief overview continues to be provided concerning the progress made in the capital property programme. Specific updates were given regarding the official opening of Redditch Police and Fire Hub on 28 September 2025, Hereford Fire Stations, the Strategic Training Facility at Leominster and the completion of a Working at Height facility at Ross-on-Wye. Plans were discussed for the relocation of the Training Centre from Droitwich to Wyre Forest Fire Station. Additionally, contracts had been awarded for the extension and refurbishment to Leintwardine Fire Station, due to commence in October 2025. Finally work to refurbish offices, welfare facilities and communal areas had commenced at Operational Logistics in Malvern.

## Project Updates

13. The main focus of recent JCC discussions in terms of projects was as follows:
- New Fire Control System,
  - Human Resources computer system replacement tender process,
  - Proposed Fleet Strategy for 2025-2030, and
  - Emergency Services Network (ESN) Update.

## Efficiencies Update

14. JCC members have received updates outlining financial challenges in the current year 2025/26, the anticipated further budgetary reduction in 2026/27 and plans to mitigate the impact of these. These updates have been based on the Treasurer's forecast that is presented to the Fire Authority, and have included discussions relating to the reductions in real terms funding next year, alongside other cost pressures such as annual inflation, wage increases and a rise in Employer National Insurance costs.

## **Conclusion**

15. The Policy and Resources Committee has responsibility to monitor and review staffing matters discussed by the JCC and as such is required to receive regular reports on these matters. This report provides Members with an update on the current issues under discussion with employee representatives.

## **Corporate Considerations**

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).	None.
<b>Strategic Policy Links &amp; Core Code of Ethics</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The JCC forum links to the successful discharge of the People Strategy and also closely links to all five elements of the Core Code of Ethics.
<b>Productivity &amp; Efficiency</b> (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency).	Items raised at JCC include areas of policy consultation where productivity and efficiency may be a key element.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None.

<p><b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).</p>	<p>Consultation has been carried out on all significant policy changes as per Service procedures.</p>
<p><b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).</p>	<p>All significant policy changes are fully supported by EIAs.</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b> (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>