

**Proposed Consultation Questions for the Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30**

*#Each question will be presented with a scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. There will also be a free-text box where we will invite further comments. #*

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is the overarching strategy that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) develop and publish every five years. It is designed to assist us in identifying the range of risks in our communities that helps to keep you, your home, your community and your environment safe from fire and other emergencies. The plan provides an overview of the foreseeable fire and rescue related risks we believe may occur across both counties in relation to the type of incidents a Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) may be called to attend. The CRMP sets out our high-level plans for tackling those risks through our Prevention, Protection and Response strategies.

This document provides insight into the productivity and potential demand on the FRS. However, a key message that we are keen to deliver, is one of assurance.

Assurance to you, our community, that Herefordshire and Worcestershire are two of the safest counties to live in England, in relation to incidents an FRS may attend. The very essence of a CRMP is to identify and assess all foreseeable hazards so that we can undertake what is known as 'resourcing to risk' and, where possible, support preventative work in those areas.

Using direct comparators to other FRSs nationally, there are no significant threats within the Service area which could be classified as 'high-risk'. Of the risks which are present, HWFRS is generally well prepared to deal with the incidents that are likely to arise and has arrangements in place to call in support from outside the area, both regionally and nationally should an incident occur which exceeds our capabilities. In line with sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, HWFRS have entered into reinforcement schemes with surrounding Services to ensure mutual assistance. In addition, HWFRS are a member of the National Resilience Programme and operate under The National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) guidance by the Home Office which details the various support available to FRS nationally.

During the research stage of this CRMP process, it has been clear there is a shift to less 'Fire' and more 'Rescue' incidents seeing a gradual decrease in property fires and, conversely, an increase in incidents such as water rescue and assisting other agencies. This trend highlights the importance of the diversity of skills within our FRS and provides assurance that our training and resources are being correctly directed.

The CRMP 2025-30 has closely followed the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Framework and Risk Methodologies for Dwelling Fires, Other Building Fires and Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and we have produced our own Water Risk definition. Through extensive engagement with the public, stakeholders and staff, we have also highlighted the following areas as developing and potentially growing risk areas:

Expansion of Housing Stock

Agriculture

Light Industry and industrial growth

Climate Change (Wildfires and flooding)

Emerging industries and technology such as waste recycling

Heritage and Tourism

Cyber Attack

The following questions have been designed to seek your opinions and views on the areas we should focus our efforts:

Many factors influence and shape how HWFRS operates, from government policy and legislative requirements to societal change. To provide a structure for assessing and understanding the factors that may influence the operating context, an extensive PESTEL analysis has been conducted. PESTEL is an acronym that stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal. We call this our Strategic Understanding of Risk.

In addition to the analysis we have undertaken, through engagement with fire service professionals, community leaders and stakeholders across various sectors the CRMP also analyses foreseeable risks which the data does not necessarily highlight, however;

- 1. To what extent do you agree/disagree that we have addressed all foreseeable Fire and Rescue related risks and are there any areas you feel we have not considered (please add these below)?**

#### RESPONSE

In order to resource to risk appropriately, we must ensure that we have relevant and up-to-date information on the risks we may face. We do this by gathering intelligence or risk information, often called our 'Intel' programme, which is a requirement under law in the Fire Services Act.

Areas we have not traditionally focussed on are becoming more likely to present new or changing risks in an emergency situation. For example, the expansion of light industry, diversification in agriculture and waste recycling are considered emergent risks and may need the Service to better understand these potential hazards.

- 2. To what extent do you agree/disagree that HWFRS should develop its Risk Information gathering programme (Intel) to look at different types of risks?**

A significant challenge across the UK relates to climate change and the Fire Service is no different in that regard. The range of challenges in relation to climate change and its impact on the natural and built environment within our communities are becoming more severe. The impacts for the UK, although less than for some other parts of the world, are still significant.

Research suggests that there may be an increase in heatwave days and a longer heatwave season, resulting in greater risk of wildfires. There will also be periods of heavier rainfall increasing the likelihood of widespread flooding, as well as periods of extreme weather.

Also, how society is responding to climate change is impacting on the types and locations of fires and other emergencies that we are attending. For example, fires involving the recycling industries and the materials involved have resulted in some larger, more challenging fires in recent years. It is, therefore, important that we ensure our operational response capabilities keep pace with this area of change.

- 3. To what extent do you agree/disagree that HWFRS should review and if necessary, develop our water and flood rescue capabilities?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. To what extent do you agree/disagree that HWFRS should review and if necessary, further develop our Wildfire capability?**

## PROTECTION

As society attempts to keep pace with the challenges presented by climate change, there is increased investment in new energy related technologies and recycling processes. For example, renewable energy sources can mean the amount of electricity being generated by renewables exceeds the amount needed at the time and therefore needs to be stored. This can pose new challenges in the event of an emergency. This includes energy storage in battery systems, which is a relatively flexible and inexpensive system. However, these technologies can present unique challenges when involved in fire.

- 5. To what extent do you agree/disagree that HWFRS should invest in understanding the risks in relation to Energy Technology and Recycling processes?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6. Should the Fire Authority be involved in a greater range of planning applications?**

While building development plans across the two counties occur over different time periods and often over decades, currently there are local and national proposals to significantly increase the provision of new housing across both counties.

The current Government's proposed reforms to planning regulations could lead to a significant rise in housebuilding targets across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Whilst this proposed increase in residential properties does not automatically mean an increase in dwelling fires or the need for more fire engines or new fire stations, the installation of sprinklers in new-build housing would dramatically reduce the risk to our communities and our firefighters.

**7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that HWFRS should continue to lobby and support the installation of residential sprinklers in new housing developments?**

#### PREVENTION

Alongside the potential increase in housing development, there may also be a need for the associated increase in local infrastructure, such as roads and highways across both counties.

With this comes the likelihood that there will be more people and more cars on our roads. It is, therefore, possible that there may be a need for more Prevention and Response activity in relation to road safety. This does not necessarily mean our roads are becoming less safe, however with increased prevention activity, safer vehicles with better safety technology and improved road infrastructure, we would aim to make our roads safer for everyone.

Based on robust data analysis, HWFRS currently targets those people most at risk from of having a serious collision on our roads; primarily younger drivers.

**8. To what extent do you agree/disagree that HWFRS should consider developing our road safety initiatives to a wider range of road users, subject to available resources?**