



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority
Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday, 26 November 2025, 10:30

Chairman: Mr D Boatright-Greene
Vice-Chairman: Ms D Toynbee

Minutes

Members Present: Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr D Boulter, Mrs J Carwardine, Mr B Hopkins, Mr M Jones, Mr T Miller, Mr D Morehead, Mrs H Robson, Mrs J Shaw, Ms D Toynbee

0304 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr J Kenyon and Cllr R Phillips.

0305 Named Substitutes

Cllr D Davies substituted for Cllr R Phillips.

0306 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

0307 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0308 Budget Monitoring 2025/26 – Month 7

The Treasurer presented the Budget Monitoring 2025/26 Month 7 report for Members to scrutinise the current position on the revenue and capital budget for 2025/26 and to receive an update on Treasury Management.

Members were informed of an error in the recommendation, which should have read £17,125 deficit rather than £17,125m.

With reference to the Revenue Budget, Members were reminded that the

Strategic Leadership Board had identified savings (with a full year impact of £1.1m) to close the budget gap. Members' attention was drawn to the On-Call overspend of £0.547m which had largely arisen from the operationally busy summer period. The Treasurer advised Members that although the Authority held a reserve specifically for operational contingencies and could choose to draw this sum from the reserve, this would then require to be made good and other underspending within the budget would compensate. A report detailing the dry weather operational activity during the summer would be presented to the Fire Authority in December.

Members' attention was also drawn to paragraph 11 of the report, the £0.080m mentioned was an error and should be removed.

There was a question from a Member in relation to the minimum wage and the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that the Service's lowest pay scale 3 was currently above minimum wage.

With reference to the Capital Budget, Members noted the changes detailed in the report to the budget since it was last reported to the Committee in September.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

i) Noted the small £17,125 Revenue Budget deficit to be funded from the Budget Reduction Reserve; and

ii) Noted the changes to the Capital Budget.

0309 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Director of Protection) presented a report to inform and allow the Committee to scrutinise the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since the last update provided on 9 July 2025.

Members were pleased to note the new issues under discussion with employee representatives since the last update, which included HMICFRS, CRMP, numerous policies, property, project and efficiency updates. A Member questioned how the issues were logged following the meetings and were assured that each meeting is minuted, no action is closed down until it's been resolved and all emails received from Trade Unions relating to actions are also kept.

Following on from the property update, the Chief Fire Officer then took the opportunity to provide a verbal update of decisions recently taken at a Strategic Leadership Board meeting.

Strategic Training Facility at Leominster - the cost of building had now made the project unaffordable, a reasonable sum was being kept to seek alternative options in North Herefordshire. Additionally the Chief Fire Officer gave an update on Droitwich Fire Station - although this location had never been rebuilt, capital costs were too high to move the fire station. Following re-evaluation since training had now moved to Wyre Forest, and the agreement that the station is fit for purpose, it had been agreed to occupy part of the site, sell off the 5 houses and let out part of the site that's not used. An update would be provided to Members with suggestions at a later date.

RESOLVED 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***

0310 Performance and Information: Quarter Two Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) provided Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Service's performance for Quarter 2 2025 to 2026.

Members' attention was drawn to the 2,435 incidents attended in this quarter, an increase of 218 incidents (9.8%) compared to the same quarter last year. This was made up of 863 Fires (an increase of 88%), 650 Special Service Incidents (a decrease of 5.7%) and 922 False Alarms (a decrease of 13.8%). Members noted that the increase of fires was highly likely due to the prolonged period of dry weather from March 2025 to August 2025 which had led to reduced moisture in the soil and vegetation, making it more susceptible to fire and the spread of fire. This coupled with the higher temperatures observed during the summer of 2025 was highly likely to have contributed to the increase in the number of outdoor fires in the open during Q2 2025 to 2026.

Members noted that 1,866 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) were completed in Q2 2025 to 2026; of those visits, 416 (22%) were delivered by Prevention Technicians and 1,450 (78%) were delivered by operational

crews. Unfortunately the number of HFSVs fell nine short of the quarterly target of 1,875 HFSVs this quarter, however 121 HFSVs were attempted but declined or residents were unavailable at the time of the pre-arranged visit. 405 inspections by qualified Fire Safety Inspectors were also conducted, which was above the quarterly target to reach the annual target of 1,350 inspections.

Members also noted that there had been 23 total enforcements this quarter, an increase of 3 compared to Q2 in 2024 to 2025.

When scrutinising the Attendance Performance Measure (APM), Members were pleased to note that out of the 716 incidents examined this quarter, 606 (85%) met the Attendance Performance Measure (APM), which was a 5% improvement when compared to the same period last year. The three main reasons why the APM was not met during this quarter were: difficulty in locating the reported incident (24 incidents), road obstruction (15 incidents) and not booking in attendance (seven incidents). The information had been passed onto Response managers who would review this data to ascertain which delays could be avoided and determine any learning outcomes and improvements.

With regard to the On-Call fire engine availability, Members were satisfied with the slightly decreased availability of 79% during Q2 2025 to 2026 when compared to the availability during Q2 2024 to 2025 as 11 of the first On-Call fire engine had over 85% availability and 5 had between 75% and 84% availability.

Members were pleased to note that the overall absence due to staff sickness had decreased to 2.15 days lost per person and the Chief Fire Officer explained that this was helped with a robust attendance management policy that enabled staff to get back into work with the right support. The Chief Fire Officer commented that he was very proud of the extensive wellbeing and welfare support available to staff with an investment to drive sickness levels down.

With regard to RTCs, Members were advised that the Service used to run a 'Dying to Drive' campaign for young drivers but this relied on schools bringing students to fire stations and therefore was not always well attended. The Service now works with partner agencies to educate young people in schools via the 'Your Impact' programme. In addition the Prevention department also run sessions with mature drivers and now work with the Young Offending Service and do as much as possible within the limited budget. Members praised officers for the work they do to keep the roads safe.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee will continue to receive

performance reports and oversight of the measures being taken to address any issues arising. Where improvements are required, any necessary action will be reported to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

[Cllr J Carwardine left the meeting at 11.38am and returned to the meeting at 11.42am].

RESOLVED that having scrutinised the details of the Q2 2025 to 2026 performance, those details be accepted and approved and that the following headlines, in particular, be noted:

i) A total of 2,435 incidents were attended in Q2 2025 to 2026 which was an increase of 9.8% (+218) compared to Q2 2024 to 2025;

ii) Fire incidents (863) increased by 88% (+404) when compared to Q2 2024 to 2025 and were higher than the five-year average of 524;

iii) Special Services (650) decreased by 5.7% (-39) when compared to Q2 2024 to 2025. Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) increased by 5.4% (10) compared to Q2 2024 to 2025; and

iv) False Alarms (922) decreased by 13.8% (-147) compared with Q2 2024 to 2025.

The Meeting ended at: 11:43

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman