



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority

Full Authority

AGENDA

Tuesday, 14 October 2025

10:30

**Herefordshire Council Offices
Plough Lane, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 0LE**

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WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY'S MEETING. These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 25 Councillors and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 Herefordshire Council Councillors.

Agenda Papers - Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

Chairman - The Chairman, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting, sits at the head of the table.

Officers - Accompanying the Chairman is the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers of the Fire and Rescue Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

The Business - The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

Decisions - At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Councillors to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Tuesday, 14 October 2025, 10:30

Agenda

Councillors

Mr R Phillips (Chairman), Mrs H Robson (Vice Chairman), Mr A Amos, Mr D Aubrey, Mr A Bailes, Mr S Bastow, Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr D Boulter, Mrs J Carwardine, Mr O Cleary, Mr D Davies, Mr M Dunkley, Mr B Hopkins, Mr M Jones, Miss E Kearsey, Mr J Kenyon, Mr C McSweeney, Mr T Miller, Mr A Monk, Mr D Morehead, Mr R Morris, Mrs J Shaw, Ms D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

No.	Item	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest (if any) This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.	
3	Chairman's Announcements To update Members on recent activities.	

4	Public Participation	
	To allow a Member of the public to present a petition, ask a question or make a statement relating to any topic concerning the duties and powers of the Authority.	
	Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal Services in writing or by email indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation to be received no later than 2 clear working days before the meeting (in this case 9 October 2025). Further details about public participation are available on the website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone numbers/email listed below.	
5	Confirmation of Minutes	1 - 8
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2025.	
6	Changes to Allocation of Committee Seats	9 - 13
	To seek ratification of a change to the allocation of Committee seats as a result of Cllr Kenyon and Cllr Bastow swapping committees; and	
	To increase the Membership of the Appointments Committee	
7	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30 Outcome of Public Consultation	14 - 19
	To present the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (FRA) the opportunity to review and scrutinise the findings of the public consultation for the draft CRMP 2025-30.	
8	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030	20 - 22
	To provide the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (FRA) the opportunity to scrutinise the amendments made to the draft CRMP 2025-30 following the period of public consultation.	
9	Resource Review Update Report	23 - 28
	To allow the Fire Authority (FRA) Members to scrutinise and approve the benefits and outcomes of the Resource Review.	

10	His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Q1 Update 2025-26	29 - 47
	To provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and the progress made on actions during Quarter 1 2025-26, following the inspection report dated 29 November 2023.	
11	Minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee	48 - 59
	To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 9 July 2025 and 10 September 2025.	



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 25 June 2025, 10:30

Chairman: Mr R Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Mrs H Robson

Minutes

Members Present: Mr D Aubrey, Mr A Bailes, Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mrs J Carwardine, Mr D Davies, Mr M Dunkley, Mr B Hopkins, Miss E Kearsey, Mr J Kenyon, Mr C McSweeney, Mr T Miller, Mr A Monk, Mr D Morehead, Mr R Morris, Mr R Phillips, Mrs H Robson, Mrs J Shaw, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

0531 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr R Phillips be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, and unless he ceases to be a Member of the Authority, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

0532 Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr H Robson be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, and unless she ceases to be a Member of the Authority, to hold office until her successor becomes entitled to act.

0533 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr A Amos, Cllr D Boulter, Cllr O Cleary and Cllr D Toynbee.

Apologies were also received from Cllr M Bayliss, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

0534 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government

Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

0535 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed new Members to their first meeting and hoped they would enjoy their time on the Fire Authority.

There was a minute's silence for the two Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service firefighters who had died recently and mention was made to Cllr D Prodger, an ex Fire Authority Chairman, who had died a few months ago. Tributes were also paid to those members of the Council who had lost their seats in the recent Worcestershire elections, in particular to Cllr K Taylor who had been the Chairman of the Fire Authority for the past 4 years.

The Chairman announced the following:

- Hereford Fire Station - the station had now moved to its temporary location and Herefordshire Members would be invited to see it shortly. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that there were no issues with operational cover at the new location and he had received positive feedback from staff. Hereford Members would see the existing station demolition starting soon. Cllr Kenyon informed the Chief Fire Officer that he had fitted a time delay camera to the pub opposite to watch the demolition and share. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Comms team would be in touch with Cllr Kenyon to share the footage.
- Barbourne Works evacuation - Prohibition Notice had been served to the managing agents First Port and approximately 180 residents had been rehomed. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Prohibition Notice had been issued for their safety due to the cladding and fire not being able to be contained to individual flats. Residents had now moved back onto the ground and first floor areas. Providing required work was completed in the next couple of weeks, the remaining residents would be able to move back.
- A long serving member of support staff had been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours. Sonja Sinclair-Elechi, who had worked for HWFRS for 30 years, had been awarded the **King's Fire Service Medal** for Distinguished Service. In 2005 she spearheaded the formation of a Critical Incident Support Team (CIST) to provide a professional debriefing and trauma support after high-impact events. She now manages, along with two co-ordinators, the CIST team who make a real difference behind the scenes. Latterly she established the Welfare Team, supporting colleagues facing stress, anxiety and a host of wellbeing challenges - all this alongside her role as a payroll officer. This achievement was a true reflection of all the years Sonja had given to helping others thrive. The Chairman commented how grateful the Service were for her, and how proud the Service were to see her honoured in this way.

- Teams were delighted to be shortlisted as finalists for two categories in the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2025. The judges awarded HW Fire a '**Highly Commended**' award in the category of **Commitment to the Community**. The team were then overjoyed to be announced as overall winners in the **Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace** category. Both awards were very well deserved and a huge achievement. The Chairman thanked everybody who had contributed in some way to the Service receiving this recognition.

0536 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

0537 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 5 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0538 Appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies (LGA)

A report was presented by the General Counsel, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to consider the allocation of Committee seats to political groups in accordance with the requirements for political balance, the appointment of Members to those committees and appointments to outside bodies.

RESOLVED that:

i) Committee seats be allocated to political groups as set out at Appendix 2 and the appointment of individual Members be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders;

ii) The Authority determine the allocation of any remaining committee seats to non-aligned Members;

iii) The Authority appoint:

a) Cllr D Boatright-Greene and Cllr D Toynbee as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee; and

b) Cllr E Kearsey and Cllr C McSweeny as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Audit, Scrutiny & Standards Committee.

iv) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Appointments Committee;

v) Cllr R Udall be appointed as the Member Champion for Culture;

vi) Cllr D Morehead be appointed as the representative on the Health & Safety Committee;

vii) Cllr R Morris be appointed as the Member Champion for the Fire Cadets;

viii) The current practice for representation and voting on the Local Government Association and the LGA Fire Commission, as described in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report, be continued.

[Cllr E Kearsy and Cllr R Morris left the meeting at 11.01am].

0539 Review of Constitution

The General Counsel, Clerk & Monitoring Officer presented a report to adopt updates to the Constitution that had been considered and recommended by the Audit & Standards Committee.

Members were informed that there had been a comprehensive review of the Authority's existing Constitution. It was still fit for purpose and there were few substantive changes proposed other than updating relevant financial limits/thresholds and adopting a new simplified code of conduct in line with the LGA model form. The opportunity was also taken to ensure the wording of the Constitution more explicitly reflected the HMICFRS' 'characteristics of good'.

Members suggested that the names of the Committees should be changed to include the word 'scrutiny', to better reflect the Committees' purpose. Following discussion it was agreed that the names of the Committees be changed to:

- Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
- Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee

It was also agreed that the Terms of Reference and names of both Committees would be further considered at the next Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 24 September 2025.

RESOLVED that:

i) the updates to the Constitution be adopted;

ii) pending further consideration of the names and Terms of Reference at the next Audit and Standards Committee:

a) the name of the Policy and Resources Committee be changed to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and

b) the name of the Audit and Standards Committee be changed to Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee.

0540 Completion of the Audit 2023/24

The Treasurer presented a report to conclude the delayed 2023/24 Statement of Accounts process and consequential Audit arrangements and to confirm that the 2024/25 process was on schedule. The Treasurer reminded Members that all previous years have always had a clean audit.

Members were asked to approve the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts to enable the External Auditor to issue the relevant Audit Opinion as soon as it was ready. On publication the approved Statements would include the Audit Opinion and the already approved Annual Governance Statement.

Members were assured that steps had been taken to ensure that the 2024/25 process will proceed in accordance with normal Regulatory timescales.

RESOLVED that having considered the Audit Completion Report:

i) The Letter of Representation be approved;

ii) The Statement of Accounts 2023/24 be approved;

iii) The Auditor's Annual Report be noted and accepted; and

iv) The additional audit fee be noted.

0541 Provisional Financial Out-turn 2024-25

Members scrutinised the provisional financial results for 2024/25 presented by the Treasurer, and the transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves in accordance with the Reserves Strategy.

Members also noted that the Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 were within the appropriate limits set by the Authority and no matters required further action.

RESOLVED that:

i) the provisional financial results for 2024-25 be noted;

ii) the transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves in accordance with the Reserves Strategy be approved; and

iii) the Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 be confirmed within the limits set by the Authority and no matters required further action.

0542 Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

The General Counsel, Clerk & Monitoring Officer presented a report on the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 to enable Members to scrutinise the evidence compiled during the self-assessment review, which provided the assurances that sit behind the Annual Governance Statement.

Members noted that there were no areas where the direction of travel had decreased during 2024/25 or where the status was less than satisfactory and approved the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 for publication.

RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 be approved.

0543 Annual Service Review 2024-25

The Chief Fire Officer presented the Annual Service Review 2024-25 for Members' scrutiny and approval.

Members noted that the Annual Service Review provided a look back at the range of work undertaken over the last year, including headline activities and incident statistics. The Service had attended 8,212 incidents during 2024-25, which was a 3% increase on the previous year. There was a 3% rise in special service incident call-outs due to periods of wet weather and storms and there was also a 9% rise in road traffic collisions.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority approved the Annual Service Review 2024-25 for publication on the Service website.

0544 Annual Service Plan 2025-26

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented the Annual Service Plan 2025-26 for Members' scrutiny and approval.

[Cllr D Morehead left the meeting at 11.53am, returned at 11.55am].

Members noted that the Annual Service Plan was a look ahead to activities planned for the coming year, with priorities arranged against the overall aims of the CRMP 2021-25 and the research conducted for the 2025-30 CRMP, including the Service's Core Strategies.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority approved the Annual Service Plan 2025-26 for publication on the Service website.

0545 Collaboration Document 2025

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented the Collaboration Document 2025 allowing Members the opportunity to scrutinise and consider for publication.

Members noted that the Authority had considerable experience in collaborating both formally and informally with a wide range of organisations, emergency services partners, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

Members were extremely pleased with the document and approved it for publication.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority approved the Collaboration Document 2025 for publication.

0546 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Q4 Update 2024-25

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented the HMICFRS Improvement Plan for Members to scrutinise the progress made on actions during Quarter 4 2024-25, following the inspection report dated 29 November 2023.

Members noted that as of Q4 2024-25, the Service had now completed 66% of the actions in the Improvement Plan, which included completion of all actions under Areas For Improvements 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. The remaining 33% of the actions were in progress.

Members were informed that work was currently underway to prepare for the next inspection in February 2026 which included further analysis of the Areas for Improvement, including those which had been marked as complete to provide assurance that there had been continued progress.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority noted the progress made on the actions to deliver the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and that further progress had been made up to the end of March 2025 (Q4).

0547 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 5 March 2025.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 5 March 2025 be received and noted.

0548 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 16 April 2025.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 16 April 2025 be received and noted.

The Meeting ended at: 12:36

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Report of General Counsel, Clerk & Monitoring Officer Changes to Allocation of Committee Seats

Purpose of report

1. To seek ratification of a change to the allocation of Committee seats as a result of Cllr Kenyon and Cllr Bastow swapping committees; and
 2. To increase the Membership of the Appointments Committee
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- (i) the revised allocation of committee seats set out in Table 2 of Appendix 1 (whereby Cllr Kenyon has replaced Cllr Bastow on Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee) be approved; and***
- (ii) Appointments Committee be increased to 8 Members in order to accommodate Cllr Robinson as vice-chairman***

Introduction and Background

3. At the last meeting of the Authority, Members agreed the allocation of committee seats in accordance with the principles of political balance that, so far as reasonably practicable:
 - (i) if one political group comprises a majority of the Authority's total membership, the majority of seats on each committee must be allocated to that group. As there is no group with an overall majority this is not currently applicable;
 - (ii) the total number of seats allocated to each political group across all committees bears the same proportion as the number of Members of the group to the membership of the Authority overall; and
 - (iii) subject to (i) and (ii) above, the proportion of the seats allocated to each political group on each individual committee, bears the same proportion as the number of Members of that group to the membership of the Authority overall.
4. The resultant allocation was as shown in Appendix 1, table 1. This included Cllr Kenyon being allocated a seat on Audit, Scrutiny & Standards Committee.

- It has since been agreed with the leader of the Reform Group that Cllr Bastow will swap with Cllr Kenyon, thereby enabling Cllr Kenyon to have his preference of a seat on Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee. This involves a change to the previously agreed allocation of seats and therefore requires the approval of the Authority. Following consultation with the Chairman and Group Leaders, the change was permitted to go ahead in the meantime.

Appointments Committee

- Also at the last Authority meeting, Cllr Robson as vice-chairman of the Authority was appointed vice-chairman of the Appointments Committee as is normal. However, in order to accommodate this it is necessary to increase the size of that committee to eight (previously seven). This can be achieved within the rules on political balance.

Conclusion

- The proposed changes results in a revised political balance allocation as shown in Table 2. This is only a very minor change and still within the spirit of the rules on political balance.
- A revised table of Committee appointments is attached at Appendix 2.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	This links to the arrangements for discharge of the Authority's business and the appointment of committees, as set out in the Authority's constitution.
Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency).	n/a
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	n/a
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Chairman & Group Leaders have been consulted

Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	n/a
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	n/a

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Allocation of Committee Seats according to political balance

Appendix 2 - Revised Committee Appointments

Background papers –

FRA report 25/6/25.

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990

Political balance & Allocation of Committee Seats

Table 1 – as approved 25/6/25

Group		Conservative Group	Reform UK Group	Green & Independent Alliance	Lib Dem Group	Non-aligned Members	Total
		6 24%	9 36%	5 20%	3 12%	2	25
Committee	Seats						
Appointments	7	2	3	1	1	-	7
Audit, Scrutiny & Standards	12	3	4	2	1	2	12
Policy & Resources Scrutiny	13	3	5	3	2		13
TOTAL SEATS	32	8 25%	12 38%	6 19%	4 13%	2	32
	%						

Table 2 – Proposed

Group		Conservative Group	Reform UK Group	Green & Independent Alliance	Lib Dem Group	Non-aligned Members	Total
		6 24%	9 36%	5 20%	3 12%	2	25
Committee	Seats						
Appointments	8	2	3	2	1	-	8
Audit, Scrutiny & Standards	12	3	5	2	1	1	12
Policy and Resources Scrutiny	13	3	4	3	2	1	13
TOTAL SEATS	33	8 24%	12 36%	7 21%	4 12%	2	33
	%						

<u>Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee</u>				
Conservative Group (3)	Reform UK (5)	Ind. & Green Alliance (3)	Liberal Democrat (2)	Non-aligned Members
Cllr. R. Phillips	Cllr. A. Monk	Cllr. D. Toynbee (vice-Chair)	Cllr. D. Boatright-Greene (Chair)	Cllr. J. Kenyon
Cllr. A. Miller	Cllr. J. Shaw	Cllr. H. Robson	Cllr. J. Carwardine	
Cllr. D. Morehead	Cllr. M. Jones	Cllr. D. Boulter		
	Cllr. B. Hopkins			
<u>Audit, Scrutiny & Standards Committee</u> (cannot include Chair/Vice-Chair of Authority, Chair of Policy & Resources or Group Leaders)				
Conservative Group (3)	Reform UK (4)	Ind. & Green Alliance (2)	Liberal Democrat (1)	Non-aligned Members (2)
Cllr. E. Kearsey (Chair)	Cllr. A. Amos	Cllr. A. Bailes	Cllr. C. McSweeney (Vice- Chair)	Cllr. R. Udall
Cllr. R. Morris	Cllr. S. Bastow	Cllr. T. Wells		
Cllr. D. Davies	Cllr. O. Cleary			
	Cllr. D. Aubrey			
	Cllr. M. Dunkley			
<u>Appointments Committee</u>				
Conservative Group (2)	Reform UK (3)	Ind. & Green Alliance (2)	Liberal Democrat (1)	
Cllr. R. Phillips (Chair)	Cllr. A. Monk	Cllr. D. Boulter	Cllr. D. Boatright-Greene	
Cllr. A. Miller	Cllr. B. Hopkins	Cllr. H. Robson (Vice-Chair)		
	Cllr. A. Amos			

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30 Outcome of Public Consultation

Purpose of report

1. To present the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (FRA) the opportunity to review and scrutinise the findings of the public consultation for the draft CRMP 2025-30.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that having scrutinised the findings of the public consultation for the draft CRMP 2025-30, it be agreed that the findings are accepted and approved. In particular it be noted that:

- i. In all the main proposals from the consultation process the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed.***
- ii. Almost four-in-five respondents (79%) agreed with HWFRS's overall approach to the draft CRMP 2025-2030.***
- iii. Three quarters of respondents (75%) agreed that HWFRS's draft CRMP 2025-30 is clear and easy to understand.***
- iv. Both focus groups agreed that the direction of the CRMP seems sensible and that HWFRS is concentrating on the right issues.***

Introduction and Background

2. The CRMP is a requirement for all Fire and Rescue Services in England, stemming from the Fire and Rescue National Framework. This framework, established by the government, outlines the strategic direction for fire and rescue authorities, including the expectation that they will produce a CRMP to address local risks and needs. The CRMP acts as a roadmap, prioritising the work of the Service by analysing and addressing the specific risks within its communities.
3. A draft CRMP 2025-30 was produced and considered by the Fire Authority (FRA) on 11 December 2024. To gather the views of residents, staff and other stakeholders on the draft CRMP 2025-30, a formal public consultation process was undertaken between 13 January and 7 April 2025.

4. Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by HWFRS, under the governance of the FRA, to offer independent advice on the design and conduct of the consultation programme, undertake a programme of key consultation activities and report respondents' views, gathered through an open consultation questionnaire and two in-person focus groups with seldom heard residents (one with residents in very rural areas and one with people with learning disabilities). The summary report from ORS is available at Appendix 1.
5. Two written submissions were also received: one from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) (Appendix 2) and one from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) (Appendix 3).
6. A comprehensive social media campaign promoted the consultation and the draft CRMP, along with the accompanying documents, and were available on the Service website. A report was also produced analysing the Social Media analytics from the consultation campaign (Appendix 4). It shows that the social media posts had 33,088 views, and 341 clicked the link from the social media post, through to access the consultation documentation.

Summary of Consultation Questions and Main Findings

7. In addition to the public focus groups, 152 responses to HWFRS's online consultation questionnaire were received.
8. The following paragraphs summarise the main proposals from the consultation process and summary findings. However, readers are referred to the full report attached (Appendix 1) for detailed analysis.

Risk

9. In reference to risk, respondents were asked if they agreed whether or not HWFRS had **identified all foreseeable Fire and Rescue related risks** within the draft CRMP. They were also asked if they felt there were any areas that had not been covered in the draft CRMP.
10. Just over four-in-five respondents (82%) agreed that HWFRS has identified all foreseeable Fire and Rescue related risks within the draft CRMP. Less than one-in-ten (6%) disagreed, while 12% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Response

11. Under Response, respondents were asked whether or not HWFRS should develop its **risk information gathering programme (Intel)** to look at different type of risks.
12. Over nine-in-ten respondents (91%) agreed that HWFRS should develop its risk information gathering programme (Intel) to look at different type of risks. Only 2% of respondents disagreed, while 7% neither agreed nor disagreed.

13. Identifying emergent risks in this way was also considered eminently sensible by participants in both focus groups. Other suggested areas of focus were solar farms; disused buildings and fuel stations/garages, in the context of the increasing prevalence of electric vehicles requiring charging.
14. On climate change, they were asked if they agreed that HWFRS should review and, if necessary, develop its **water and flood rescue capabilities**. Similarly, whether or not HWFRS should review and, if necessary, further develop its **wildfire capability**.
15. More than nine-in-ten respondents (91%) agreed that HWFRS should review and, if necessary, develop its water and flood rescue capabilities. Only 3% disagreed, while 6% neither agreed nor disagreed.
16. Around four-in-five respondents (82%) agreed that HWFRS should review and, if necessary, further develop its wildfire capability. Only 2% disagreed, while 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Protection

17. The public were also asked whether or not they thought that HWFRS should invest in understanding the risks in relation to **existing and emerging energy technology** and if the Service should invest in understanding the risks in relation to **recycling processes**.
18. They were also asked if they agreed that the FRA should be involved in a **greater range of planning applications** and if HWFRS should lobby for and support **the installation and maintenance of residential sprinklers** in new housing developments.
19. Almost nine-in-ten respondents (89%) agreed that HWFRS should invest in understanding the risks in relation to existing and emerging energy technology. 3% disagreed, while 8% neither agreed nor disagreed.
20. Over four-in-five respondents (86%) agreed that HWFRS should invest in understanding the risks in relation to recycling processes. 5% of respondents disagreed, while around one-in-ten (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
21. Almost two thirds of respondents (66%) agreed that the FRA should be involved in a greater range of planning applications. Around one-in-six (16%) disagreed, while approximately one-in-six (18%) neither agreed nor disagreed.
22. The questionnaire respondents who commented on this issue were strongly supportive of HWFRS focusing on the risks associated with existing and emerging energy sources, especially given the increasing prevalence of lithium-ion battery technology.

23. This was echoed in both focus groups, where there was strong support for HWFRS enhancing its understanding of risk in this area, given the growing prevalence of lithium-ion battery technology and the challenging nature of the fires that result from its inappropriate disposal. Participants in both groups also commented on the need for people to be able to dispose of small appliances containing lithium-ion batteries appropriately and easily (i.e., in supermarkets).
24. Three quarters of respondents (75%) agreed that HWFRS should lobby for and support the installation and maintenance of residential sprinklers in new housing developments. Over one-in-ten (12%) disagreed, while 13% neither agreed nor disagreed.
25. The proposal was supported at the group for people with learning disabilities, who asked whether the provision of sprinklers could also apply to re-developed buildings, “especially as town centre/older buildings are being converted into housing/flats”. A couple of participants at the rural group also acknowledged that there is little cost attached to lobbying for sprinkler systems and said they would support HWFRS doing so if it considers their installation in new build properties to be a significant benefit.

Prevention

26. The final section addressed whether HWFRS should consider **developing its road safety initiatives** to a wider range of road users, subject to available resources.
27. Over four-in-five respondents (85%) agreed that HWFRS should consider developing its road safety initiatives to a wider range of road users, subject to available resources. Only 5% disagreed, while one-in-ten (10%) neither agreed nor disagreed. A few questionnaire respondents also commented on the importance of road safety education, particularly considering the likely future increase in road traffic and the apparently poor condition of local roads.
28. While acknowledging that young drivers remain most likely to have a serious road traffic collision, both focus groups agreed with the principle of widening out road safety initiatives to a wider group of road users, older people in particular. Some members of the rural group considered road safety to be more of a police responsibility than an FRS one. However, it was suggested that it may be better addressed (and indeed funded) on a national rather than a local level.
29. In his written submission, the West Mercia PCC said, “*he welcomes the focus on partnership-led interventions and dedicated risk-reduction road safety initiatives targeted at young drivers and other vulnerable road users*”.

Summary

30. In all proposed areas the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed.
31. Almost four-in-five respondents (79%) agreed with HWFRS’s overall approach to the draft CRMP 2025-2030 while 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

32. Three quarters of respondents (75%) agreed that HWFRS' draft CRMP 2025-30 is clear and easy to understand.
33. Both focus groups agreed that the direction of the CRMP seems sensible and that HWFRS is concentrating on the right issues.
34. In the written submissions, the FBU made 23 recommendations (Appendix 2) to which HWFRS has provided a formal response (Appendix 5).
35. The West Mercia PCC expressed his full support for HWFRS' CRMP (Appendix 3), which he describes as a *“clear, well-evidenced, and up-to-date assessment of the fire and rescue-related risks facing communities across Hereford and Worcester”* that will provide *“a robust and transparent basis for local planning and operational delivery.”*
36. The responses received will be fed back into the CRMP.

Conclusion

37. To gather the views of residents, staff and other stakeholders on the draft CRMP 2025-30, a formal consultation was undertaken between 13 January and 7 April 2025.
38. Overwhelmingly, the respondents were in favour of the proposals put forward either 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with areas across Risk, Response, Prevention and Protection.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>The public consultation cost approx. £15,000 which was drawn from the pre-planned P&I budget.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>The CRMP and, by association, the public consultation, spans all core and enabling strategies. These will be reviewed in-line with the objectives set out in the CRMP.</p>
<p>Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)</p>	<p>Thorough community risk management planning ensures the most effective and efficient use of the Service's resources. The Service objectives all facilitate the most productive delivery of the Service KPIs.</p>

<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures, and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>The CRMP is a risk management plan. It covers all foreseeable risks throughout our communities and sets out our high-level plans and how we intend to allocate our resources to mitigate them.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>This is an independent, public consultation targeted and promoted to all members of our communities including stakeholders and staff.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>An extensive EIA was produced alongside the development of the CRMP and can be found in the supporting documents bundle.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>No personal data is processed in the consultation report.</p>

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 –CRMP 2025-30 Consultation Report
- Appendix 2 – FBU Written submission
- Appendix 3 – PCC Written submission
- Appendix 4 – Social media analytics report
- Appendix 5 – HWFRS formal response to the FBU

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (FRA) the opportunity to scrutinise the amendments made to the draft CRMP 2025-30 following the period of public consultation.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the final version of the CRMP 2025-2030, incorporating the changes suggested during the consultation process, be agreed and approved. In particular it be noted that additional sections in the main CRMP have been added following consultation:

- i. our response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiries.***
- ii. our preparedness for a pandemic.***
- iii. our role in the Local Resilience Forum.***

Introduction and Background

2. Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by HWFRS, under the governance of the FRA to undertake a public consultation to gather the views of local residents, staff, and other stakeholders on HWFRS's draft CRMP 2025-30. The formal public consultation was undertaken between 13 January and 7 April 2025.
3. The responses were gathered through an open consultation questionnaire, and two in-person focus groups with seldom heard residents (one with residents in very rural areas and one with people with learning disabilities). HWFRS also received two written submissions: one from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and one from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for West Mercia.

Summary of Main Findings

4. A separate paper provides a breakdown of the consultation responses but, broadly speaking, the public largely agreed that the draft CRMP identified all foreseeable Fire and Rescue related risks. In addition, the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the methodologies used to identify and assess those risks.

5. Questionnaire respondents were also asked if they felt there were any areas that had not been covered in the draft CRMP. While generally agreeing that most risks were covered, suggestions around other possible areas included pandemic threat and response and unsafe cladding on residential buildings with particular reference to the Grenfell Tower Inquiries.
6. The PCC's written submission was praising of the approach the Service are taking towards road safety and described the draft CRMP as a "*clear, well-evidenced and up-to-date assessment of the fire and rescue-related risks facing communities across Hereford and Worcester*".
7. The Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) written submission made multiple recommendations which were all considered in detail.
8. Whilst many of these areas are referenced in the supporting research documents, HWFRS has undertaken to include additional sections in the main CRMP (Appendix 1) on our response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiries and our preparedness for a pandemic. HWFRS has also ensured that our role in the LRF is referenced clearly in relevant areas of the main document.
9. There have also been various minor amendments such as typing corrections and minor statistical discrepancies.
10. Pending approval of the Fire Authority, the CRMP will be hosted on our website and set the future strategic direction for the next five years.

Impact of Changing Resources Since Consultation

11. Since publication of the draft CRMP for consultation, the financial landscape has changed significantly for the Authority. As previously reported, to the Policy, Resources and Scrutiny Committee on 09 July 2025, plans have been set out to address the financial challenges faced during 2025/2026 and 2026/2027, and there may be future financial challenges up to 2030 in the government's current funding review of English Fire Services.
12. With that in mind, it should be noted that the plans set out in the CRMP can only be delivered subject to available resources. The ambition initially envisaged when the CRMP 2025-30 was drafted and consulted upon may now need to be curtailed and whilst all areas will still be progressed the pace, depth and breadth of change in these areas may no longer be achievable. This will be addressed in any subsequent annual action plans should the strategic document be approved at this meeting.

Conclusion/Summary

13. To gather the views of residents, staff and other stakeholders on HWFRS's draft CRMP 2025-30, a formal consultation was undertaken between 13 January and 7 April 2025.

14. After careful consideration of all feedback, HWFRS has undertaken to include additional sections in the main CRMP on our response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiries and our preparedness for a pandemic. HWFRS has also ensured that our role in the LRF is referenced clearly in relevant areas of the main document.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	There have been no resource implications in amending the CRMP.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	The CRMP and, by association, the public consultation, spans all core and enabling strategies. These will be reviewed in-line with the objectives set out in the CRMP.
Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)	Thorough community risk management planning ensures the most effective and efficient use of the Service's resources. The Service objectives all facilitate the most productive delivery of the Service KPIs.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The CRMP is in essence, a risk management plan. It covers all foreseeable risks throughout our communities and sets out our high-level plans and how we intend to allocate our resources to mitigate them.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	These amendments have been made as a direct response to feedback from the formal public consultation
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An extensive EIA was produced alongside the development of the CRMP and can be found in the supporting documents bundle.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	No personal data is processed in the consultation report.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – A Summary of Our Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30

Appendix 2 – Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Resource Review Update Report

Purpose of report

1. To allow the Fire Authority (FRA) Members to scrutinise and approve the benefits and outcomes of the Resource Review.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Fire Authority note the benefits and outcomes of the Resource Review. In particular that by reallocating existing funding from some of the fire engines with low average availability and low number of incidents, the Service has:

- ***Increased crewing and resilience on its busier front-line fire engines.***
- ***Improved the support for On-Call fire engines.***
- ***Reduced overtime costs.***
- ***Improved the longer-term sustainability of the On-Call duty system.***
- ***Continued to explore new ways of working (crew carriers).***

Introduction and Background

2. In 2024 Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) conducted a review of its resources to examine the arrangements of its operational response and how it could be improved in terms of efficiency and usage, alongside attempting to address some long-standing issues with On-Call availability at certain locations.
3. It was proposed that by reallocating existing funding from some of the fire engines with low average availability and that attended a very low number of incidents, the Service could increase crewing and resilience on its busier front-line fire engines. In addition, it was proposed that this reinvestment would support some improvements across the On-Call duty system, whilst reducing the cost of excessive overtime shifts for regular deficiencies in Wholetime staff.
4. In June 2024, following public consultation, the FRA agreed with the Chief Fire Officer's (CFO) proposals and approved the Resource Review. This reinvestment of public money and the removal of seven fire engines on fire stations with more than one fire engine and the alteration in availability of another On-Call fire engine, has improved the efficiency of the Service's operational resources.
5. At the FRA meeting in June 2024, the CFO agreed that the proposals would be reviewed and reports would be presented to the FRA in 2025.

Resource Review Findings

6. It is important to note that the Resource Review did not propose to close any fire stations, nor remove or reduce any first responding fire engines at any location and it only directly affected locations where there was more than one fire engine. Consequently, since its implementation, there has been no impact on the response times of the first fire engines attending incidents because of the Resource Review, nor have there been any resilience issues at larger incidents. However, the additional benefits predicted in the review that have been realised are detailed below.

Increasing crewing levels up to Five Firefighters on some Wholetime Fire Engines

7. Prior to the Resource Review, and due to historically acute financial reductions for over a decade, the ten fire engines crewed by Wholetime staff at the busiest locations have, for many years, nearly always been mobilised with four firefighters (the minimum required in HWFRS). Crewing above that level, e.g. five firefighters on a Wholetime fire engine was a rare occurrence as per the [CRMP 2021-2025](#)
8. The reinvestment of some of the funding realised through the Resource Review used to employ more Wholetime firefighters on all Watches enables some of the busier fire engines to be crewed by five firefighters and provides on-duty some immediately available resilience for Wholetime staffing shortages, or training, without the need to call staff back to work on overtime. To achieve this the Service increased the number of Wholetime firefighters employed at Hereford, Worcester and Wyre Forest Fire Stations. This is in addition to the additional Wholetime firefighters that are already employed utilising existing funding at Malvern, Evesham and Droitwich Fire Stations, just prior to the Resource Review.
9. Prior to the Resource Review and as a comparator, in the fourth quarter 2023/24, (Q4, Jan to Mar 2024), there were only eight shifts on Wholetime fire engines that deployed with a crew of five firefighters. However, in Q4 of 2024/25 (after the Resource Review changes were implemented) there have been 91 shifts on Wholetime fire engines with a crew of five firefighters. **This equates to 1,113 hours of Wholetime fire engines crewed with five firefighters in that period of three months.**

Station	Q4 2023/24	Q4 2024/25	Q1 2024/25	Q1 2025/26
Hereford	5	32	5	31
Worcester	2	32	4	25
Wyre Forest	1	27	10	24
Total	8	91	19	80

Decreasing the Cost of Overtime

10. The Increase in the number of Wholetime firefighters on duty has had, as proposed in the Resource Review, the additional benefit of reducing the number of times that crewing deficiencies or shortage of Wholetime staff (for example due to sickness) have needed to be covered by overtime payments.
11. Where some locations have a crew of five it is now possible to reduce that crew to four and to detach the additional firefighter to other locations at no additional direct revenue cost to the Service if there is a shortage of staff causing a fire engine to be unavailable.
12. In the second quarter in 2024/25 (Q2, Sept to Dec 2024) the overtime payments totalled £91,943. However, in the first quarter of 2025/26 **post-Resource Review, (Q1 April to Jun 2025), those overtime costs fell to £22,403**. Whilst these costs fluctuate monthly and the reduction would also fluctuate accordingly it is predicted that the overtime reduction will far exceed the predicted £100k in the Resource Review and stabilise at a much lower annual amount. However, as previous levels of overtime were excessive and unfunded not all the financial impact above £100k per annum of the Resource Review can be taken as a revenue saving.

Crew Carriers

13. Often at larger incidents it is actual firefighters that are needed at an incident and not necessarily additional fire engines or equipment. Therefore, following the Resource Review at the locations where changes were made and where the least used (second, third or in one case fourth) fire engines were removed, the On-Call crew at stations were provided with crew carrier vehicles. These vehicles can take additional firefighters at normal road speed to an incident if they cannot crew their fire engine, such as when more than six firefighters respond to a call (a Fire Engine has a maximum crew of six).
14. From July 2024 to the end of June 2025, the crew carriers have attended 50 incidents (including 14 primary fires) at various locations across both counties. **This enabled an additional 146 personnel to attend incidents, who otherwise may not have been able to attend** on a fire engine, as it is important to note that the average number of firefighters in the crew carriers was three, which would have been insufficient to crew a fire engine.

Watch Commander Cover

15. The Service has always used some of the departmental (non-station based) Watch Commanders to provide operational cover for crewing deficiencies at both Wholetime and On-Call fire stations, usually during week daytimes. These operationally qualified staff work in departments such as Training, Fire Safety, Operations Dept or District Support and do not normally work on fire stations or on fire engines as part of the main role. Prior to the Resource Review a significant amount of their available resilience was being utilised to keep

Wholetime fire engines fully crewed, in addition to the already detailed (above) high levels of overtime payments to other staff.

16. Increasing the crewing and resilience at the busier Wholetime fire stations has not only reduced the overtime costs, but as proposed in the Resource Review, it has allowed these departmental Watch Commanders to provide more operational cover at the On-Call fire stations as very little of this resilience is now needed on Wholetime stations. This assists in increasing the availability of some On-Call fire engines during periods of lowest cover (week daytimes).
17. In the first quarter of 2024-25 (Q1 Apr to Jun 2024) the departmental Watch Commanders provided 584 hours of cover at On-Call stations. In the same quarter of 2025-26 (Q1 Apr to Jun 2025) after the Resource Review was implemented, **they provided 1,420 hours of cover at On-Call fire stations a nearly threefold increase**, thus significantly increasing the availability of some On-Call fire engines during the week daytimes at no additional direct revenue cost to the Service.

Worcester City High Rise Buildings

18. During the Resource Review some questions were raised about the removal of the third fire engine in Worcester City and the potential impact on a fire in a high-rise building. For context, HWFRS across both counties have extremely low numbers of high-rise buildings, of which none have flammable cladding, are not complex and are not considered to be high risk premises. A full report was published on the high-rise buildings following the Resource Review consultation. This report showed that Worcester City high-rise buildings have very low numbers of emergency calls and extremely low numbers of fires in the buildings.
19. When a fire detection system or member of the public alerts the Service to a potential fire in a high-rise premise, the Service will mobilise at least three fire engines. Since August 2024, there have been 41 attendances to the high-rise premises in Worcester City for fire signals and since the removal of the third fire engine in Worcester City the most frequent third fire engine to now attend is from Malvern Fire Station.
20. The average response time for the third fire engine to these incidents in Worcester City since the Resource Review was implemented has been 13 minutes and 55 seconds. **The removal of Worcester's third fire engine has not significantly impacted the response time of a third fire engine to these high-rise premises**, as can be seen in the table below, where the previous average time to attend was 13m and 49s, an increase in the average by 6 seconds.

High Rise Attendance in Worcester City as Third Pump	Average Third Pump Response Time (mm:ss) (Number of incidents)
Worcester's Third Fire Engine (Removed) between 2020/21 and 2023/24	13:49 (26)
Third Fire Engine since August 2024	13:55 (17)

Conclusion/Summary

21. By reallocating existing funding from some of the fire engines with low average availability and low number of incidents, the Service has increased crewing and resilience on its busier front-line fire engines, improved the support for On-Call fire engines and reduced overtime costs. In addition, the Resource Review reinvestment programme improves the longer-term sustainability of the On-Call duty system and explores new ways of working (crew carriers).
22. As detailed in the Resource Review the full range of reinvestment changes will take some time to fully implement. However, most changes are in place and in the next 12-18 months the final elements will be implemented to provide even greater resilience, performance and availability at two On-Call Fire Stations (Leominster and Bromyard) in North Herefordshire when a new blended crewing model during the daytimes of Wholetime and On-Call staffing goes live.
23. This new model will not only improve daytime availability at these locations, but it should also speed up the local response times, deliver higher levels of prevention and protection in those areas and support other On-Call station availability with any spare capacity. It will also improve the support, risk management (Intel) and training for the On-Call staff at those locations which are all key elements of the [Response Strategy 2021-2025](#)

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The report highlights the efficiencies made from the reallocation of money from seven of the most under-used fire engines into the front line.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework).	The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the document assist in delivering the aims of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the Core Strategies.

<p>Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)</p>	<p>The reinvestment of money has increased the number of Wholetime firefighters at our busiest locations, decreased the overtime for cover moves and increased resilience in the On-Call duty system.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks the proposed control measures and risk evaluations scores)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>Extensive public and Representative Body consultation.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>An EIA is not required for this report.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>Not required – no personal data is identified.</p>

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Q1 Update 2025-26

Purpose of report

1. To provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and the progress made on actions during Quarter 1 2025-26, following the inspection report dated 29 November 2023.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Fire Authority note:

- *The progress made on the actions to deliver the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and that further progress has been made up to the end of June 2025 (Q1).*
- *That the next HMICFRS inspection will commence in February 2026 and that preparations are underway.*

Introduction and Background

2. At the Fire Authority Meeting on 13 February 2024, Members received a paper advising that the Service had developed an Improvement Plan to address the findings of [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\) inspection report dated 29 November 2023](#).
3. The Improvement Plan has now been updated to outline the progress made up to the end of Q1 2025-26. The report 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.

HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Progress Update

4. The delivery of the Improvement Plan is overseen by the Service Improvement Manager, who meets regularly with senior managers responsible for each AFI to prepare updates on actions proposed and completed. The Performance and Improvement (P&I) team also ensure that any actions carried out are fully evidenced and available for evaluation and audit. The latest update, covering up to the end of June 2025, is attached to this report (see Appendix 1).

5. The Improvement Plan now includes 32 separate actions across the 11 AFIs highlighted by the Inspectorate. Following the Strategic Leadership Board's (SLB) review, two additional actions were included in Q2 2024-25 to more comprehensively address their corresponding AFIs.
6. The Service Improvement Manager has met with each responsible manager to explain the HMICFRS requirements and work with them to populate individual improvement templates with updates on actions that have been proposed and completed.
7. The individual templates ask four basic questions about each area for improvement:
 - i. Where are we now?
 - ii. Where do we want to get to?
 - iii. What do we need to do to get there?
 - iv. How will we know we have achieved what we set out to do?
8. Updates have been received for all of the 11 specific AFIs identified by HMICFRS following the 2023 inspection. The Service Improvement Manager is currently working with each responsible manager to ensure that all evidence of progress and change is robust for evaluation and scrutiny by the Inspectorate.
9. Action plans are progressing to directly address the AFIs identified within the 11 assessment areas covered in the HMICFRS report:

Ref	Area for Improvement	Assessment Area
AFI 1	The Service should make sure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.	Understanding the risk of fire and other risks.
AFI 2 AFI 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service should make sure staff carry out home fire safety visits competently. • The Service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective. 	Preventing fires and other risks.
AFI 4	The Service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of unwanted fire signals.	Protecting the public through fire regulation.
AFI 5	The Service should make sure it has an effective system to learn from operational incidents.	Responding to fires and other emergencies
AFI 6 AFI 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service should make sure it has an effective method to share fire survival guidance information with multiple callers and that it has a dedicated communication link in place. • The Service should make sure it has an overarching cross-border exercise strategy. The strategy should assure the FRA that exercise objectives are in line with Community Risk Management Plan 	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

	(CRMP) risks and that learning is recorded, shared and actioned.	
AFI 8	The Service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.	Making best use of resources.
AFI 9	The Service needs to make sure it has adequate plans in place to close its identified budget gaps.	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future.
AFI 10	The Service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure staff don't work excessive hours.	Promoting the right values and culture.
AFI 11	The Service should make sure it has processes in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation.	Managing performance and developing leaders.

10. Further progress was made against plans in Q1. As of Q1 2025-26, the Service has now completed 75% of the actions in the Improvement Plan. This includes completion of all actions under AFIs 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Meanwhile, the remaining 25% of the actions are in progress.
11. Progress against the actions set out in the Improvement Plan is currently as expected, with no areas being raised as a particular concern by managers. Further progress is expected during Q2 2025-26 which should see more actions and AFIs progressed to completion.
12. Work is currently underway to prepare for the next inspection which includes further analysis of the AFIs, including those which have been marked as complete to provide assurance that there has been continued progress.
13. The HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead continues to meet with responsible department heads in the lead up to the inspection to discuss the progress made with their AFIs. The Service Improvement Manager will continue to facilitate regular discussion and updates regarding these.
14. The next HMICFRS Inspection will commence in February 2026. The document request and staff survey will be given to HWFRS in the week commencing 5 January 2026. Work is ongoing to ensure that we are prepared for the inspection.
15. The Service Improvement Manager is also working on preparations to ensure that staff are aware of the HMICFRS 'Characteristics of Good', which the inspectorate use to demonstrate what level of performance Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) need to achieve to be graded as 'good' in their inspections.
16. Currently, all target dates being met will mean that the service will achieve completion against all actions in Q4 2025-26.
17. SLB reviewed the actions in the Improvement Plan in October 2024, January 2025 and September 2025 and advised on any changes or inclusions deemed necessary to effectively meet the requirements of the AFIs. Subsequent

reviews have taken place with the Assistant Chief Officer and the HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead.

18. Quarterly updates will continue to be provided to the SLB and to the Fire Authority.

Conclusion/Summary

19. The Q1 update of the HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2023-25 shows that further progress has been made up to the end of June 2025 (Q1).
20. The next HMICFRS Inspection will commence in February 2026. The document request and staff survey will be given to HWFRS in the week commencing 5 January 2026. Work is ongoing to ensure that we are prepared for the inspection.
21. The Authority are recommended to note the progress made in delivering the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. Updates will continue to be reported each quarter.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>The Improvement Plan highlights areas for improvement relating to effectiveness, efficiency and people. Actions to address these areas are likely to have resource implications, which will be considered in the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>Actions proposed and developed through the Improvement Plan are directly linked to the CRMP, and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The actions contained in the plan will all have a positive impact on delivery against the three Core Strategies and associated enabling strategies. All proposals will be assessed to ensure they meet the Service’s overall Core Purpose and Vision.</p>
<p>Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)</p>	<p>The Improvement Plan contains actions that have been formulated in response to the inspection report. These actions may have implications on productivity and efficiency and will continue to be considered in the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores)</p>	<p>Any risks associated with proposals will be assessed through the Improvement Plan.</p>

<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>Proposals to deliver the Improvement Plan have the full participation of Senior Managers in relevant Service departments. The Improvement Plan, when published, will be publicly available on the Service website.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>An EIA is not required for this report. EIAs will be completed as appropriate when preparing proposals through the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personnel data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>Impact assessments will be completed as required for specific actions related to the Improvement Plan.</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2023-25 – Q1 Update

[Link to HMICFRS Inspection report](#)



HMICFRS Improvement Plan

2023 Inspection





During May to July 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspected Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS). HWFRS was selected as the 11th Service to be inspected in the third round of inspections.

The inspection team from HMICFRS carried out their in-depth review, focusing on how effective and efficient we are and how well we look after our people. The report, titled "Fire and Rescue Service 2023-25, Effectiveness, Efficiency and People – An inspection of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service" was published on 29th November 2023, and this is [the link to the report](#).

The inspection measured the Service across 11 assessment areas which they hope will encourage Fire and Rescue Services to consider inspection findings as a whole. HMICFRS have also expanded their previous four-tier system of graded judgements to five.

In the report, the Inspectorate state that they are pleased with the performance of HWFRS and the improvements made since the last inspection, and they would encourage the Service to continue to make improvement in the areas they have highlighted.

The inspection report highlighted 11 Areas for Improvement (AFI) and recommend that action be taken to address them. In response, the Service has prepared an Improvement Plan. This Improvement Plan is owned by senior managers and is updated on a quarterly basis and published as progress is made.

The Improvement Plan summarises the proposed actions against the AFIs noted in the inspection report.

Areas for Improvement: Summary

Assessment Area	Area for Improvement	Page
Understanding fires and other risks	AFI-1 - The service should make sure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.	4
Preventing fires and other risks	AFI-2 - The service should make sure staff carry out home fire safety visits competently.	5
	AFI-3 - The service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective.	6
Protecting the public through fire regulation	AFI-4 - The service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of unwanted fire signals.	7
Responding to fires and other emergencies	AFI-5 - The service should make sure it has an effective system to learn from operational incidents.	8
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	AFI-6 - The service should make sure it has an effective method to share fire survival guidance information with multiple callers and that it has a dedicated communication link in place.	9
	AFI-7 - The service should make sure it has an overarching cross-border exercise strategy. The strategy should assure the service that exercise objectives are in line with community risk management plan risks and that learning is recorded, shared and actioned.	10
Making best use of resources	AFI-8 - The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews, and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.	11
Future affordability	AFI-9 - The service needs to make sure it has adequate plans in place to close its identified budget gaps.	12
Promoting the right values and culture	AFI-10 - The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure staff don't work excessive hours.	13
Managing performance and developing leaders	AFI-11 - The service should make sure it has processes in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation.	14

Understanding fires and other emergencies – (AFI-1)	
Area for Improvement	The service should make sure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Fire Control project team to address and reduce the existing backlog of temporary risk information as part of the data cleanse for the introduction of the new mobilisation system	Q1 2025/26
Implement the new reporting system, including ongoing monitoring of risk information processing time from submission to going live on the system	Complete
Develop a process for review and the updating / removal of old information	Complete
Establish KPI(s) for the ongoing reporting of actions 2 and 3 above for continued monitoring	Complete
Strategic Lead	<i>Assistant Director, Protection</i>
Tactical Lead	<i>Group Commander Ops Policy, Assurance and Fire Control</i>

Preventing fires and other risks – (AFI-2)

Area for Improvement

The service should make sure staff carry out home fire safety visits competently

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Undertake a review of the HFSV referral process to ensure HFSV's are being appropriately risk assessed, completed within time frames, suitably referred to the prevention team and ultimately that the referral process is being delivered effectively

Complete

Establish a clear process to communicate with crews to ensure a robust referral pathway is in place

Q2 2025/26

Produce a digital training video for crews undertaking Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)

Complete

Strategic Lead

Assistant Director, Prevention

Tactical Lead

Head of Prevention

Preventing fires and other risks – (AFI-3)

Area for Improvement

The service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Further embed the HFSV behaviour change evaluation process, and monitor and review to demonstrate continual improvement

Complete

Establish a process to evaluate the effectiveness of Prevention campaigns e.g. implement a stakeholder feedback mechanism

Complete

Develop an approach to evaluate changes in behaviour following the delivery of road safety education and intervention

Complete

Strategic Lead

Assistant Director, Prevention

Tactical Lead

Head of Prevention

Protecting the public through fire regulation – (AFI-4)

Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of unwanted fire signals	
HWFRS Action Proposed		
		Target Date
	Establish terms of reference and commence a review on how we communicate with businesses etc.	Complete
	Updated policy to be created and published	Complete
	Produce guidance on mobilisation and provide Fire Control training	Complete
	Establish a consistent recording and review process for unwanted fire signals	Complete
Strategic Lead	<i>Assistant Director, Protection</i>	
Tactical Lead	<i>Group Commander, Protection</i>	

Responding to fires and other emergencies – (AFI-5)

Area for Improvement

The service should make sure it has an effective system to learn from operational incidents

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Incorporate a review of RTC fatalities into quarterly Fire, Death and Serious Injury (FDSI) Board meetings

Complete

Automate the process of requesting debriefs that hit the submission criteria, to improve the return rate of debriefs

Complete

Implement a new Organisational Learning and action tracking system

Complete

Strategic Lead

Assistant Director, Protection

Tactical Lead

Group Commander Ops Policy, Assurance and Fire Control

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents – (AFI-6)

Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it has an effective method to share fire survival guidance information with multiple callers and that it has a dedicated communication link in place
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HWFRS Action Proposed

HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Update and review Fire Survival Guidance / Evacuation documentation including Evacuation Commander role	Complete
Review the existing procedures, carry out updates and test as required	Complete
Implement training for staff based on the above	Complete
Procure and implement an electronic information sharing system to share Fire Survival Guidance	Complete

Strategic Lead	<i>Assistant Director, Protection</i>
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Tactical Lead	<i>Group Commander Ops Policy, Assurance and Fire Control</i>
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Responding to fires and other emergencies – (AFI-7)

Area for Improvement

The service should make sure it has an overarching cross-border exercise strategy. The strategy should assure the service that exercise objectives are in line with community risk management plan risks and that learning is recorded, shared and actioned

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Carry out a review of the Station Exercises Policy and Exercise Planning Guidance

Complete

Develop an overarching cross-border exercise plan to sit alongside the existing Exercise Policy and Guidance

Complete

Strategic Lead

Assistant Director, Response

Tactical Lead

Group Commander, North District

Making the best use of resources – (AFI-8)

Area for Improvement

The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews, and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Review the existing mechanisms that HWFRS staff use when reviewing and evaluating collaboration.

Q1 2025/26

Review evaluation processes that have taken place and establish a consistent means of evidencing how we monitor, review and evaluate current and future collaborations.

Q2 2025/26

Strategic Lead

Assistant Director, Prevention

Tactical Lead

Group Commander, Performance & Information

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future – (AFI-9)	
Area for Improvement	The service needs to make sure it has adequate plans in place to close its identified budget gaps
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Revise the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), providing an updated position on potential budget gaps	Complete
Continue to monitor the budget gap and revise plans accordingly	Complete
Strategic Lead	<i>Director of Finance</i>
Tactical Lead	<i>Assistant Director, Finance</i>

Promoting the right values and culture – (AFI-10)	
Area for Improvement	The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure staff don't work excessive hours
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Establish a service-level assurance process for employees with secondary employment or dual contracts and those who provide additional work	Q1 2025/26
Implement a formal reporting mechanism on secondary employment and hours worked	Q3 2025/26
Strategic Lead	<i>Assistant Director, Prevention</i>
Tactical Lead	<i>Head of HR & Development</i>

Managing performance and developing leaders – (AFI-11)

Area for Improvement

The service should make sure it has processes in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Develop a Talent Management strategy for the service

Q2 2025/26

Establish a delivery plan that is fair and equitable to enable talented individuals to develop and progress

Q2 2025/26

Develop a framework for managers which they can use to identify and develop high-performing staff (appraisal) in line with the NFCC talent management toolkit

Q4 2025/26

Strategic Lead

Assistant Director, Prevention

Tactical Lead

Head of HR & Development



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority
Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday, 09 July 2025, 10:30

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

Minutes

Members Present: Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr B Hopkins, Mr T Miller, Mr D Morehead, Mr R Phillips, Mrs H Robson, Mrs J Shaw, Ms D Toynbee

0293 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Boulter, Cllr J Carwardine, Cllr M Jones and Cllr A Monk.

0294 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0295 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales) and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

Cllr J Shaw declared that her husband was employed by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and a member of the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

[Cllr D Morehead entered the meeting at 10.32am].

0296 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 5 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0297 Efficiencies 2025-2027

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report outlining financial challenges in the current year 2025/26, anticipated further budgetary reduction in 2026/27 and plans to mitigate the impact of these.

[Cllr T Miller entered the meeting at 10.36am].

Members were informed that this current year 2025/26 the Authority saw a significant reduction in funding from central government. Based on the Treasurer's forecast there would most likely be similar 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. It was anticipated that over the next two years the Authority would need to manage a reduction in funding of over £1m. This would be managed by reducing some annual revenue budgets and annual spending where possible, not filling vacant posts and posts created by leavers and some minor departmental restructuring, which could result in potential redundancies.

The Chief Fire Officer gave assurances that within this year only (2025/26) it was his intention not to reduce firefighter posts on fire stations, or the front-line staffing for delivery of Prevention or Protection services. The Chief Fire Officer believed the Service might be able to achieve up to circa £1m of efficiencies without needing to reduce front-line staffing, however this assurance could not be given around any future savings in 2026/27 or other years.

Members noted that staff had been communicated with and advised of the challenges faced and the Chief Fire Officer had communicated the issues faced and potential solutions, alongside early engagement with staff and the trade unions. The Service would continue to keep staff and their representatives updated as this matter progressed.

Members thanked the Chief Fire Officer for providing clear documentation and approved the plans to address the impact of financial challenges during 2025/26 and 2026/27.

RESOLVED that the Committee approved the plans to address the impact of financial challenges during 2025/26 and 2026/27.

0298 Budget Monitoring 2025/26 – Quarter 1

The Treasurer presented Members with a report to scrutinise the current position on the revenue and capital budget for 2025/26, and to receive an update on Treasury Management.

Following scrutiny and discussion, Members accepted the revenue budget allocation adjustments and noted the changes in the budget and the consequential impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Members noted that the Authority was significantly under-borrowed to the extent of around £10m. This shortfall was funded by disinvesting the large cash balances held in relation to the ear-marked revenue reserves and monies statutorily set aside for future repayment of loans. As the Invest to Improve programme progressed this cash would be used up and additional long-term borrowing would be required. The cost of which is already included in the MTFP.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

i) Confirmed the revenue budget allocation adjustments;

ii) Noted that the budget had now moved from a £359,000 deficit to a small £125,000 surplus;

iii) Noted the consequential impact on the MTFP; and

iv) Noted the changes to the Capital Budget.

0299 Update on the Attendance Performance Measure (APM)

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and consider the Attendance Performance Measure (APM) process.

Following scrutiny of the report, noting that the APM was significantly lower for water rescue mobilisations, Members agreed that wholetime crews should be assessed against On-Call response zones due to the time it took crews to don Personal Protective Equipment when responding to water rescue incident types. It was also noted that when the APM is not met, officers are asked to submit a response explaining why the attendance time was not met and for any actions that could be undertaken to improve in the future.

RESOLVED that Members approved the following proposed changes to the APM process:

i) The response zones (isochrones) should be re-evaluated in the financial year 2025-26;

ii) When responding to water rescue incident types, wholetime crews should be assessed against On-Call response zones due to

the time taken to don Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) prior to mobilisation; and

iii) Further work would be undertaken to establish the impact on response times for On-Call staff to don the same water response PPE, and a future report with any recommendations would be submitted.

0300 Pensions Board Update (Fire Pension Schemes)

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented an update on the establishment and activities of the Pensions Board.

Members were reminded of the Matthews Remedy and the McCloud/Sargent Remedy, which was useful for new Members, and were reassured that these were part of a national issue and not a failure of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority.

RESOLVED it be noted that the Pensions Board continued to be compliant with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013.

0301 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2024 / 2025

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented the Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2024/2025 for Members' scrutiny and approval.

Members were pleased to note that there was no evidence of modern slavery in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service or supply chains and approved the Statement for publication on the Service website.

RESOLVED that Members approved the updated Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2024/2025 for publication on the Service website.

0302 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report to inform and allow the Committee to scrutinise the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since the last update provided on 20 November 2024.

Members noted the current and existing issues under discussion with employee representatives.

RESOLVED that the following new and existing items currently under discussion by the Joint Consultative Committee be noted:

- i) Resource Review Update***
- ii) HMICFRS Action Plans***
- iii) Community Risk Management Plan Update***
- iv) Budgets and Finance Update***
- v) Policies (noted and discussed)***
- vi) Promotion Processes***
- vii) Property Update***
- viii) Projects Update***

0303 Performance Report Quarter 4 2024 to 2025 (01 Jan to 31 Mar 2025)

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention provided Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the Service's performance for Quarter 4 2024 to 2025.

Members noted the performance data for Quarter 4 2024/25 including the total number of incidents attended had decreased by 0.2% to 1,837 compared to the same quarter of 2023/24, 1,713 Home Fire Safety Visits had been completed and 354 Protection inspections had been undertaken. Members commented that the visual graphics were very easy to understand however the percentages shown for Days/Shifts Lost per Person could be explained better. Members were assured that this would be looked at for future reports.

[Cllr D Toynbee left the meeting at 12.26pm].

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the details of the Q4 2024 to 2025 performance headlines, in particular that:

- i) A total of 1,837 incidents were attended in Q4 2024 to 2025 which was a decrease of 0.2% (-4 incidents) compared to Q4 2023 to 2024.***
- ii) Fire incidents (364) increased by 26% (+75 incidents) when compared to Q4 2023 to 2024 and were higher than the five-year average of 337.***
- iii) Special Services Incidents (614) decreased by 10% (-66 incidents) when compared to Q4 2023 to 2024. Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) decreased by 16% (-31 incidents) compared to Q4 2023 to 2024.***

iv) False alarms (859) decreased by 1% (-13 incidents) compared with Q4 2023 to 2024.

The Meeting ended at: 12:33

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority
Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday, 10 September 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 J Kenyon, Mr A Monk, Mr R Phillips, Mrs H Robson, Mrs J Shaw, Ms D Toynbee

0304 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr T Miller and Cllr D Morehead.

0305 Named Substitutes

Cllr D Davies substituted for Cllr D Morehead.

0306 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales) and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

0307 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0308 Budget Monitoring 2025/26 – Quarter 2

The Treasurer presented Members with a report on the current position of the revenue and capital budget for 2025/26 and an update on Treasury Management for scrutiny.

The Treasurer explained to Members that the original revenue budget now had a deficit of £0.798m, following the outcome of the national negotiated pay awards which added a further £0.366m to the original figure. Members were pleased to note that the Strategic Leadership Board had agreed a final savings plan to offset this which reduced costs by £0.807m in this year, bringing the budget to an overall small surplus of £0.008m. Members noted that the full year impact of these savings was £1.1m.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that a redundancy process would shortly commence, resulting in the loss of fewer than five support staff posts, in order to achieve the necessary budgetary savings for the current year.

Members noted that front-line staff were unaffected but the Chief Fire Officer indicated that it may not be possible to guarantee this if further cuts were required next financial year.

Members queried why the Fire Service did not receive a reduction in business rates on their premises as they are providing a public service. The Chief Fire Officer explained that, following recent communication with the Chair and Vice-Chair, he was liaising with the National Fire Chief's Council for advice and they would lobby on our behalf.

Members noted the three significant variations to the revised budget of £44.669m:

- Facilities Management - £0.070m overdue to the 2024/25 business rates for the fire share of the joint Bromsgrove Fire/Police station which were not notified until August 2025.
- Finance - £0.080m additional income due to the Truck Manufacturers Cartel Compensation Claim which had now been settled.
- Capital financing - due to savings in costs as a result of 2024/25 programme slippage.

Members expressed their concern at the potential impact of the intended 'fair funding review' and instructed officers to continue making every effort to influence government in the hope of avoiding the need for future cuts to services.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

i) Confirmed the revenue budget allocation adjustments;

ii) Noted that the budget had now moved from a £125,000 surplus to

a small £8,600 surplus;

iii) Noted the consequential impact on the MTFP;

iv) Noted the changes to the Capital Budget; and

v) Expressed concern at the potential impact of the intended 'fair funding review' and instructed officers to continue making every effort to influence government in the hope of avoiding the need for future cuts to services.

0309 Property Update

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Director of Protection and Assets) provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Property update, specifically reviewing the Hereford Fire Station Update and Project Overview.

Following an explanation of the new Hereford Fire Station build, Members understood why it had taken so long for the project to commence and were pleased that it had finally started. It was noted that working with different partners had caused considerable delays over the years and this would not be recommended for future work. Members were pleased to hear that the crews were quite happy at the temporary Hereford site while the old building was demolished and rebuilt.

Officers were commended for producing such a comprehensive document, which enabled Members to clearly understand how it had all evolved.

A Member queried the invoices that were paid and whether they were completely scrutinised prior to payment. The Treasurer was pleased to confirm that all invoices are thoroughly checked before approving for payment for large projects. The Chief Fire Officer also assured Members that a retention is always held for large projects to get the contractor back to resolve snagging issues before final payment.

It was noted that minor building works could sometimes be paid before the standard of work is quality checked as it was just too expensive to get everything checked prior to payment for small works.

RESOLVED that having scrutinised the details of the Property update, specifically reviewing the Hereford Fire Station Update and Project Overview, those details were accepted and approved.

0310 Overview of the Fire Control Project

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Director of Protection and Assets) provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Fire Control Project Overview and progress to date.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that, on 12 September 2018, both Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire Authorities approved the creation of the Strategic Fire Alliance to support a resilient Command and Control function. It was agreed to procure a single system allowing each Authority to retain its own Fire Control to preserve local expertise and knowledge. It was agreed to procure an off-the-shelf system already in use by another Fire Service.

Members noted that Cleveland Fire Brigade and County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service had expressed interest in joining the procurement. The tender and specification were subsequently amended, with the potential benefits of enhanced resilience and reduced system costs. The collaborative nature of the project had resulted in reduced costs of £14m across the four Authorities.

The Chairman asked whether additional Fire Services could be integrated into the system and was advised that this would be possible, provided they shared similar demographics and operated on-call stations.

Members noted that following a full open competitive tender process, the contract was awarded to Motorola Solutions as they offered the best value for a robust, cloud-hosted mobilising system that met the collective needs of all four Services.

The project was deemed a great success and the new Command and Control System is scheduled to be live in all four Services during 2026.

RESOLVED that Members note the Fire Control Project Overview, including the eleven referenced background papers, and decisions that have been made by the Fire Authority to date: noting the contract sign-off date of 14 December 2024, and project progress to date.

0311 Fire Cadets Annual Review – 2024/2025

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Fire Cadets activity for 2024/2025.

Following an introduction to the role of the Fire Cadets, which operates out of Droitwich Fire Station, a Member queried value for money for the £8,000 budget that was provided yearly to maintain its function. It was queried whether more than 18 Fire Cadets could be accommodated, however it was explained that safeguarding requirements necessitate an

appropriate adult to child ratio, which is challenging to maintain when relying on volunteers to give up their time.

A Member enquired about establishing a unit at Hereford. It was noted that this would depend on the availability of volunteers and would be considered again once the new station was built.

Members were pleased to learn that the Fire Cadets programme continues to thrive, offering young people valuable skills, experiences and opportunities for personal development as well as delivering meaningful contributions to the Service's Prevention agenda.

RESOLVED that having scrutinised the report, it be agreed that the Fire Cadets programme continues to thrive, delivering meaningful contributions to the Service's Prevention agenda and offering young people valuable skills, experiences and opportunities for personal development.

0312 Quarter 1 Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) provided Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Service's performance for Quarter 1 2025 to 2026.

Members attention was drawn to the Prohibition Notice that had been issued at a block of flats in Worcester as the premises were noted under the Cladding Safety Scheme. After interim works were agreed, residents from the ground and first floors had returned to their homes. The Prohibition Notice remained in force for the second and third floor flats whilst remediation works were being investigated.

A Member queried the attendance times from the temporary Hereford Fire Station site and was pleased to note that no additional delays had occurred.

The Fire Authority Chairman expressed concern over the extremely dry summer and the high number of fires in the open. He had requested a report for the December Fire Authority meeting outlining how the Service responded and identifying best practice.

Discussion took place regarding farmland fires and whether advice is provided following incidents involving bonfires or machinery. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that crews always offer advice post incident, although it is not always followed.

A Member queried delays in registering arrival at incidents. The Chief Fire Officer explained that while occasionally it can be overlooked, crews

cannot register arrival until they are physically at the scene.

A query was raised regarding charging for false alarms. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that Fire Services are legally prohibited from charging for attendance at such calls.

RESOLVED that having scrutinised the details of the Q1 2025 to 2026 performance, those details be accepted and approved and that the following headlines, in particular, be noted:

i) A total of 2,115 incidents were attended in Q1 2025 to 2026 which was an increase of 3.6% (+73) compared to Q1 2024 to 2025;

ii) Fire incidents (665) increased by 54.7% (+235) when compared to Q1 2024 to 2025 and were higher than the five-year average of 477;

iii) Special Services (614) decreased by 2.5% (-16) when compared to Q1 2024 to 2025. Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) decreased by 18.5% (-35) compared to Q1 2024 to 2025; and

iv) False Alarms (836) decreased by 14.9% (-146) compared with Q1 2024 to 2025.

The Meeting ended at: 12:26

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman