



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority

Full Authority

AGENDA

Wednesday, 18 October 2023

10:30

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

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION – YOUR RIGHTS. The press and public have the right to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. You have:

- the right to attend all Authority and Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose “confidential information” or “exempt information”;
- the right to film, record or report electronically on any meeting to which the public are admitted provided you do not do so in a manner that is disruptive to the meeting. **If you are present at a meeting of the Authority you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed or recorded by anyone exercising their rights under this paragraph;**
- the right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>);
- the right to inspect minutes of the Authority and Committees for up to six years following the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>); and
- the right to inspect background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.

Please note that when taking part in public participation, your name and a summary of what you say at the meeting may be included in the minutes.

A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be available at meetings of the Authority and Committees. If you have any queries regarding this agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of these rights of access to information please contact Committee & Members’ Services on 01905 368209 or by email at committeeservices@hwfire.org.uk.

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

Wednesday, 18 October 2023, 10:30

Agenda

Councillors

Mr C B Taylor (Chairman), Mr R J Phillips (Vice Chairman), Mr A Amos, Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr D Boulter, Mr B Brookes, Mrs J Carwardine, Mr D Chambers, Mr B Clayton, Mr D Davies, Mr A Ditta, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mr J Kenyon, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey, Ms J Monk, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Morris, Ms L Robinson, Ms D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

No.	Item	Pages
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1	Apologies for Absence	
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To receive any apologies for absence.

2	Declarations of Interest (if any)	
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This item allows the Chairmen to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.

3	Chairman's Announcements	
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To update Members on recent activities.

4	Public Participation	
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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 13 October 2023). 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 - 11
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023.	
6	Statement of Assurance 2022-23	12 - 32
	To present the Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for approval and publication.	
7	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q1 2023/2024	33 - 59
	To update Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021.	
8	Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)	60 - 69
	To provide Members with a review of Unwanted Fire Signals and to consider the benefits/disbenefits of attending in response to automatic fire alarms.	
9	Fire Alliance Fire Control Project Update	70 - 72
	To update the Fire Authority on progress of the Fire Alliance Fire Control Project.	
10	Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee	73 - 77
	To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2023.	
11	Minutes of the Appointments Committee	78 - 79
	To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023.	
12	Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee	80 - 84
	To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023.	



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 21 June 2023, 10:30

Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Vice-Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Minutes

Members Present: Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr B Brookes, Mr B Clayton, Mr A Ditta, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey, Ms J Monk, Mr R J Morris, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr C B Taylor, Mrs D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall

0421 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr C B Taylor be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

0422 Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr R J Phillips be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

0423 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr A Amos, Cllr D Chambers, Cllr D Morehead and Cllr T Wells.

0424 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).

0425 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed the new Herefordshire Members: Cllrs D Boulter, J Carwardine, D Davies and J Kenyon to the Authority and reminded them that they represent the Authority as a whole and not just their own county.

The Chairman thanked the outgoing Herefordshire Members: Cllrs S Bowen, J Hardwick, K Hey and L Stark for their time on the Authority. It was suggested that a letter be sent to show the Authority's appreciation and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed this had already been completed.

The Vice Chairman announced that it was an honour to attend the recent memorial at Hereford Cathedral paying tribute to two fallen firefighters who had lost their lives fighting one of the most major factory fires in history in Grandstand Road, Hereford on 6 September 1993. A plaque was unveiled in their honour in the Cathedral's Lady Arbour.

0426 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

0427 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 13 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0428 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 19 April 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 19 April 2023 be received and noted.

0429 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

A report was presented by the Head of Legal Services 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.

Following recent elections to Herefordshire Council, it was noted that Cllrs D Boulter, J Carwardine, D Davies and J Kenyon had now been appointed as Members of the Fire Authority.

Cllr D Toynebee was the only remaining Member of the previous 'Herefordshire Alliance' Group. Since a group must contain at least two

Councillors, that group had now ceased. An updated Appendix was provided to Members at the meeting confirming the membership of each political group. A final copy of the Committee membership would be appended to the Minutes for Members' information.

RESOLVED that:

i) the appointments of Cllrs D Boulter, J Carwardine, D Davies and J Kenyon as Members of the Fire Authority by Herefordshire Council be noted;

ii) the allocation of Committee seats to political groups as set out at Appendix 1 be agreed;

iii) the Chairmanship and membership of Committees, be as set out in Appendix 2;

iv) the following Member Champions be reappointed:

- Cllrs D Boulter, E Marshall, N McVey - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;***
- Cllr B Clayton - Health & Safety Committee;***
- Cllr R Brookes - Fire Cadets' Member Champion;***

v) the current practice for representation and voting on the Local Government Association as set out in Appendix 2 be continued; and

vi) the place and vote on the Local Government Association Fire Commission continues to be exercised by the Chairman of the Authority.

[Cllr N McVey entered the meeting at 10.44am].

[Cllr R Morris entered the meeting at 10.47am].

0430 Provisional Financial Out-turn 2022-23

The Treasurer presented the provisional financial results for 2022-23.

Members noted the error in the Recommendation - ii) g) should read £29,374 'from' the Capital Building Projects Reserve, not 'to'. Members also noted that in paragraph 17 of the report (b vii) Net Other should read £0.135m.

Following a brief outline by the Treasurer of the reserves held, Members were pleased to approve the transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves in accordance with the Reserves Strategy as detailed in the report.

Members noted the delay in the production of the 2022-23 Statement of Accounts due to the late completion of the 2021-22 Audit. The Treasurer will certify them outside the regulatory time-scale.

There was discussion around the Urban Search and Rescue Grant which had been provided to the Service since 2011. The Chief Fire Officer explained that HWFRS is currently one of 19 teams around the country but at any time this could be removed if deemed not viable as there were several units within close proximity to HWFRS. The £800,000 grant per year is to provide specialist units when required.

Finally the Treasurer confirmed that the Prudential Indicators for 2020-21 were within the limits set by the Authority and no matters required further action.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

- i) Noted the provisional financial results for 2022-23;***
- ii) Approved the transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves in accordance with the Reserves Strategy;***
 - a) £349,251 from the Organisational Excellence Reserve;***
 - b) £324,348 from the On-Call Recruitment Reserve;***
 - c) £78,459 from Fire Control Project Reserve;***
 - d) £76,020 from the ICT Replacement Reserve;***
 - e) £74,046 from the Fire Prevention Reserve;***
 - f) £49,000 from the Taxation Income Guarantee Reserve;***
 - g) £29,374 from the Capital Building Projects Reserve;***
 - h) £23,501 from the Sustainability Reserve;***
 - i) £21,327 from the Protection Grants Reserve;***
 - j) £15,478 from the Pensions Reserve; and***
 - k) £139,843 from the Budget Reduction Reserve.***
- iii) Noted that the production of the 2022-23 Statement of Accounts had been delayed by the late completion of the 2021-22 Audit, that the Treasurer would certify them outside the regulatory time-scale, and that the Audit of the accounts would be undertaken by Grant Thornton LLP; and***

iv) Confirmed that the Prudential Indicators for 2022-23 were within the limits set by the Authority and no matters required further action.

0431 Staff Survey Feedback Presentation

Due to a technical issue Costa Antoniou from People Insight was unable to present Members with a summary of feedback from the staff survey recently undertaken. This would be sent to Members separately.

0432 Cultural Issues in the Fire Service

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the current assessment of the Service's culture and behaviours and assured Members of the measures being taken to drive progress in this area.

Members were pleased to note that the results from the staff survey and looking at the feedback from our staff in regard to the performance of managers and the actions taken to address poor behaviours in the last two years had been overwhelmingly positive. This had given some significant degree of assurance that the endemic cultural issues and managerial neglect being found in other organisations did not appear to be present in HWFRS.

Members would be able to attend a bespoke specialist EDI and cultural training programme, which was mandatory for all staff to attend.

The use of Say So had proven successful and allowed a minority of staff to report concerns they may not have otherwise reported, not only in relation to culture and behaviours. Public access to Say So PLUS reporting would be launched in the near future.

Members were pleased to note that overall it appeared that whilst there were some issues and some staff behaviours that fell well below the expected standards at times, the Service does have a positive and mainly good culture with a normally high standard of behaviour in the workplace. Despite this the Service does seem to regularly have to deal with isolated instances of poor behaviour from individuals, as would be expected in any organisation with over 700 employees. Any issues reported are dealt with swiftly and decisively by managers.

[Cllr Udall left the meeting at 11.20am].

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0433 Annual Service Review 2022-23

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) presented Members with the Annual Service Review 2022-23, which was a look back at the range of work undertaken over the last year, including headline activities and incident statistics, to adopt and approve for publication on the Service's website.

RESOLVED that the draft Annual Service Review 2022-23 be approved for publication on the Service website.

0434 Annual Service Plan 2023-24

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) presented Members with the Annual Service Plan 2023-24, which sets out the Service's key priorities for the coming year arranged under the main CRMP headings of Response, Protection, Prevention, Valuing Our Workforce and Value for Money, to adopt and approve for publication on the Service's website.

RESOLVED that the draft Annual Service Plan 2023-24 be approved for publication on the Service website.

0435 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q4 2022 / 2023

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) updated Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 December 2021.

Members were pleased to note there had been notable progress made against the Improvement Plan in Quarter 4, particularly in the People pillar which had seen a number of actions progressed to completion. As of the end of Quarter 4 2022/23, the Service had completed 62% of the actions in the Improvement Plan – up from 38.3% in Quarter 3.

HMICFRS were currently undertaking their next inspection.

[Cllr Hart left the meeting at 11.38am].

RESOLVED that the progress achieved towards addressing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan be noted. In particular that 66% of actions were now complete and a further 20% were on track to be completed by the end of Q1 2023/24.

0436 Change Function Support

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) presented a report summarising steps that had been taken to review options to support the Authority's significant change portfolio and propose a collaboration

arrangement with West Mercia Police.

Members noted that to further enhance the Authority's significant change ambitions, West Mercia Police had been identified as a preferred provider to deliver strategic advice, project management office support and project manager/business analyst capability for the change programme at a reasonable cost. Members therefore approved the proposed change management function collaboration.

RESOLVED that the Authority enter into a collaboration arrangement with West Mercia Police to support the delivery of change management within the Service.

0437 Invest To Improve Programme

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the progress of the Invest to Improve Programme and assured Members of the measures being taken and the positive impact of this programme.

Members noted the slower progress in some areas had been due to staffing and specific skill requirements, however were pleased to see significant progress in many areas.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0438 Feasibility of Droitwich Training Centre/Wyre Forest

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Director of Protection and Assets) updated Members on the feasibility to relocate the Training Centre (currently based in Droitwich) to Wyre Forest Fire Station.

Members noted that the existing Training Centre at Droitwich Fire Station was very constrained. It was therefore proposed to investigate the feasibility of relocating the Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station. These proposals would be subject to identifying additional funding and the project would be phased over a number of years.

Sketch proposals had been reviewed and architects were now reviewing comments and preparing preferred layouts. Costs had been identified in preparation to submit a planning application.

Further work was being progressed concerning project costings and the potential to release funds from the existing Droitwich site.

The Treasurer would review the financial predictions to allow a viable plan (phased if necessary) to enable the new Training Centre to be built at Wyre Forest Fire Station.

[Cllr Toynebee left the meeting at 12.06pm and returned at 12.08pm].

RESOLVED that:

- i) the feasibility update and progress be noted; and***
- ii) Members approved the progression of a proposal to potentially sell part of the accommodation on the Droitwich site to fund the Training Centre relocation, if feasible and efficient.***

0439 Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025 Update

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress in delivering the actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025.

Members noted the substantial progress made in delivering the actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025, approved the completed actions to date be published in a revised Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25 to include an updated action plan outlining the remaining/on-going actions be included.

The Vice-Chairman suggested to Members that paper copies of agendas cease being sent out. It was agreed that only under exceptional circumstances could Members request a hardcopy from Committee Services.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

- i) noted the progress to deliver the action plan set out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25;***
- ii) approved the updated action plan for 2023-25;***
- iii) approved the publication of the revised actions in an updated Environmental Sustainability Plan.***
- iv) no longer receive a hardcopy of the agendas as standard.***

0440 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 3 May 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 3 May 2023 be received and noted.

The Meeting ended at: 12:24

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Item 8 - Appointment of Committees

Appendix 1
(Final)

<u>Political Groups</u>	<u>Conservative Group</u>	<u>Green & Independent Alliance</u>	<u>Unity Group</u>	<u>Non-aligned</u>	<u>Total</u>
	Cllr C Taylor Cllr R Phillips Cllr A Amos Cllr R Brookes Cllr D Chambers Cllr B Clayton Cllr D Davies Cllr A Ditta Cllr E Eyre Cllr A Hardman Cllr I Hardiman Cllr M Hart Cllr E Marshall Cllr J Monk Cllr D Morehead Cllr R Morris Cllr L Robinson 17 68%	Cllr T Wells Cllr N McVey Cllr D Boulter Cllr D Toynbee 4 16%	Cllr R Udall Cllr D Boatright Cllr J Carwardine 3 12%	Cllr J Kenyon 1	25

Political Balance & Allocation of Committee Seats

<u>Group</u>		<u>Conservative Group</u>	<u>Green & Independent Alliance</u>	<u>Unity Group</u>	<u>Non-aligned Members</u>	<u>Total</u>
		17 68%	4 16%	3 12%	1	25
<u>Committee</u>	<u>Seats</u>					
Appointments	7	5	1	1	-	7
Audit and Standards	12	8	2	1	1	12
Policy and Resources	13	9	2	2	0	13
TOTAL SEATS	32	22 69%	5 16%	4 13%	1	32

**Appendix 2
(Final)**

Policy and Resources Committee (13)

Conservative Group (9)	Ind. & Green Alliance (2)	Unity Group (2)	Non-aligned Members (0)
Cllr R Phillips (Chairman) Cllr C Taylor (Vice Chairman) Cllr D Chambers Cllr A Ditta Cllr J Monk Cllr D Morehead Cllr L Robinson Cllr D Davies	Cllr T Wells Cllr D Boulter	Cllr R Udall Cllr J Carwardine	

Audit and Standards Committee (12)

Conservative Group (8)	Ind. & Green Alliance (2)	Unity Group (1)	Non-aligned Members (1)
Cllr M Hart (Chairman) Cllr A Amos (Vice Chairman) Cllr R Brookes Cllr B Clayton Cllr A Hardman Cllr I Hardiman Cllr E Marshall Cllr R Morris	Cllr D Toynbee Cllr N McVey	Cllr D Boatright	Cllr J Kenyon

Appointments Committee (7)

Conservative Group (8)	Ind. & Green Alliance (2)	Unity Group (1)
Cllr C Taylor Cllr R Phillips Cllr M Hart Cllr E Eyre Cllr E Marshall	Cllr T Wells	Cllr R Udall

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer/Director of Prevention

Statement of Assurance 2022-23

Purpose of report

1. To present the Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for approval and publication.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members consider and approve the Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for publication.

Introduction and Background

2. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish an Annual Statement of Assurance. The Statement should provide members of the public with assurance on governance, financial and operational matters. It should also show due regard to the expectations set out in the Community Risk Management Plan and other provisions in the National Framework.
3. The Statement of Assurance summarises key points and signposts the reader to relevant Fire Authority reports and documents publicly available on the Service website. It sits alongside these reports and it not designed to reproduce them. The Statement of Assurance 2022-23 is attached as Appendix 1.

Statement of Assurance 2022-23

4. As noted in previous years, the Statement of Assurance is a short report designed to give staff, partners and members of the public assurance that the Authority continues to do everything it can to keep them safe as well as providing value for money.
5. The Statement covers three main areas: governance, financial and operational matters. It provides information on how Authority funds are managed and how services are organised and carried out properly, efficiently and effectively. It reflects many other related documents including the Annual Governance Statement, the Statement of Accounts, audit reports, the Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 and the three Core Strategies. The Statement also provides links to other assurance documents to assist readers in assessing performance and value for money.

- This year's Statement notes that there have been delays in completing the Statement of Accounts 2022-23, but signposts readers to the Service's Accounts webpage where the document will be published once all relevant information is available.

Scrutiny of the Statement of Assurance 2022-23

- Members should satisfy themselves that the Statement, alongside other documents referenced in the report, provides appropriate levels of assurance to the public and Government in relation to governance, financial and operational matters.
- Members are asked to provide constructive scrutiny of the Statement and approve it for publication.

Conclusions/Summary

- The Statement of Assurance 2022-23 is designed to provide assurance on governance, financial and operational matters. Much of the information in the Statement is already publicly available elsewhere and links are provided in the document as advised in national guidance.
- Subject to your approval, the finalised version of the Statement will be published on the Service website.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The Statement is designed to provide assurance on resource management alongside governance and operational matters.
Strategic Policy Links & Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link in with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	The Statement sits alongside other key documents including the Annual Governance Statement, the Statement of Accounts, the Community Risk Management Plan and Core Strategies. The Statement also aligns fully with the five elements of the Core Code of Ethics.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The Statement references the requirements in relation to risk management and health & safety and provides links where appropriate.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Strategic Leadership Board consideration.

<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>As and overview document, 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>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Statement of Assurance 2022-23



Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Statement of Assurance

2022-23



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Contents

Foreword	1
Our Service in 2022-23	2
Our People	3
Our Purpose	4
Service Structure	5
Our Ethical Principles	6
Our Work in 2022-23	7
Governance Assurance	9
Financial Assurance	11
Operational Assurance	13
Directory of Assurance Documents	15
Contact Us	Back Cover

Foreword

The Statement of Assurance is an annual report designed to provide assurance to the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire that we are doing everything we can to respond to emergencies when our communities need us, and provide effective and efficient prevention and protection services.

The Statement follows national guidance set out in the 2018 Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide assurance to our community and to Government on governance, financial and operational matters. It also needs to have due regard to the expectations set out in the National Framework and the Authority's own Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

The Statement covers the year up to 31 March 2023 and highlights some of the work we are doing to drive excellence across our whole Service, and signposts readers to other documents and reports where more detail can be found. It sits alongside our strategies, plans, policies and procedures including the CRMP, the Annual Service Review and Annual Service Plan, the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Statement of Accounts. All documents can be viewed on the [Publications](#) page of the Service website.

As Chairman of the Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer, we are confident that our governance, financial and operational assurance arrangements continue to be effective and appropriate in supporting our aim to deliver our services to the best of our abilities for the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

We trust that readers will also be assured that we have conducted our business in accordance with the law and proper standards and have used our public funding efficiently, effectively and economically.



Councillor Kit Taylor
Chairman of the Fire Authority



Jonathon Pryce
*Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive*

Our Service in 2022-23

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) provides prevention, protection and emergency response services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The two counties cover a large, mostly rural area of around 1,500 square miles (3,920 square kilometres), and is home to 790,700 people, three-quarters of whom live in Worcestershire.

To cover this very large area, we organise our services around three Districts – North, South and West – which provides a balanced response to community risk.

Core Purpose

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks – responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies



686 (764 roles)
Staff Members



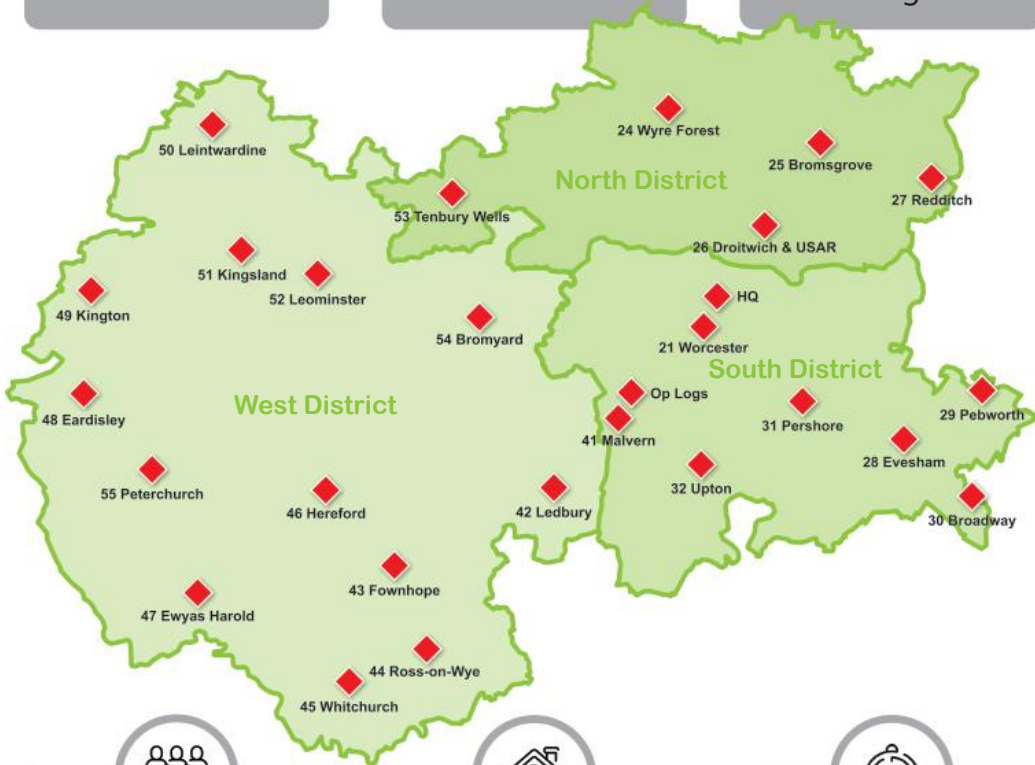
25
Fire Stations



41
Fire Engines



£37.0 Million
Budget



4,755
Road length
in Miles



790,700*
Population



342,700*
Households



392,000
Area in Hectares



43,805**
Businesses

*Census 2021

**Office for National Statistics 2022-23

Our People

Staff Structure



The Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive with the support of the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB), made up of Directors and Assistant Directors. The Service employs 686 full-time and part-time members of staff, who work in 764 roles. Firefighters make up approximately 80% of the workforce, assisted by professional teams providing support and enabling services such as financial, human resources and legal services. The 26 Fire Control firefighters are the frontline for receiving emergency calls and deploying crews to incidents. There are also 15 active volunteers supporting community safety activities.

Gender Balance

This is an improvement from 18% female - 82% male ratio recorded in March 2022.



19%



81%

Ethnic Minority Representation

Ethnic minority representation in the Service remains the same as at March 2022.



10%

Within the community*



6%

Within the Service

Staff Sickness

12.95 days/shifts were lost per person in 2022-23, an increase of 6.36% compared to 2021-22. The 2022-23 figure includes Covid-19 sickness absence, while the 2021-22 figures did not.



*Census 2021

Our Purpose

Our Purpose, Vision and Mission represents our commitment to putting the community first, keeping people safe from fire and other risks and protecting the most vulnerable. They underpin everything we do, which benefits us as individuals, the whole Service and everyone in the communities we serve. You can find out more on our [Service website](#).

Purpose

Why we are here

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks. Responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

Vision

What we want to do

Saving More Lives: Building on our successes to continue to make a difference, improve lives and help secure resilient communities.

Mission

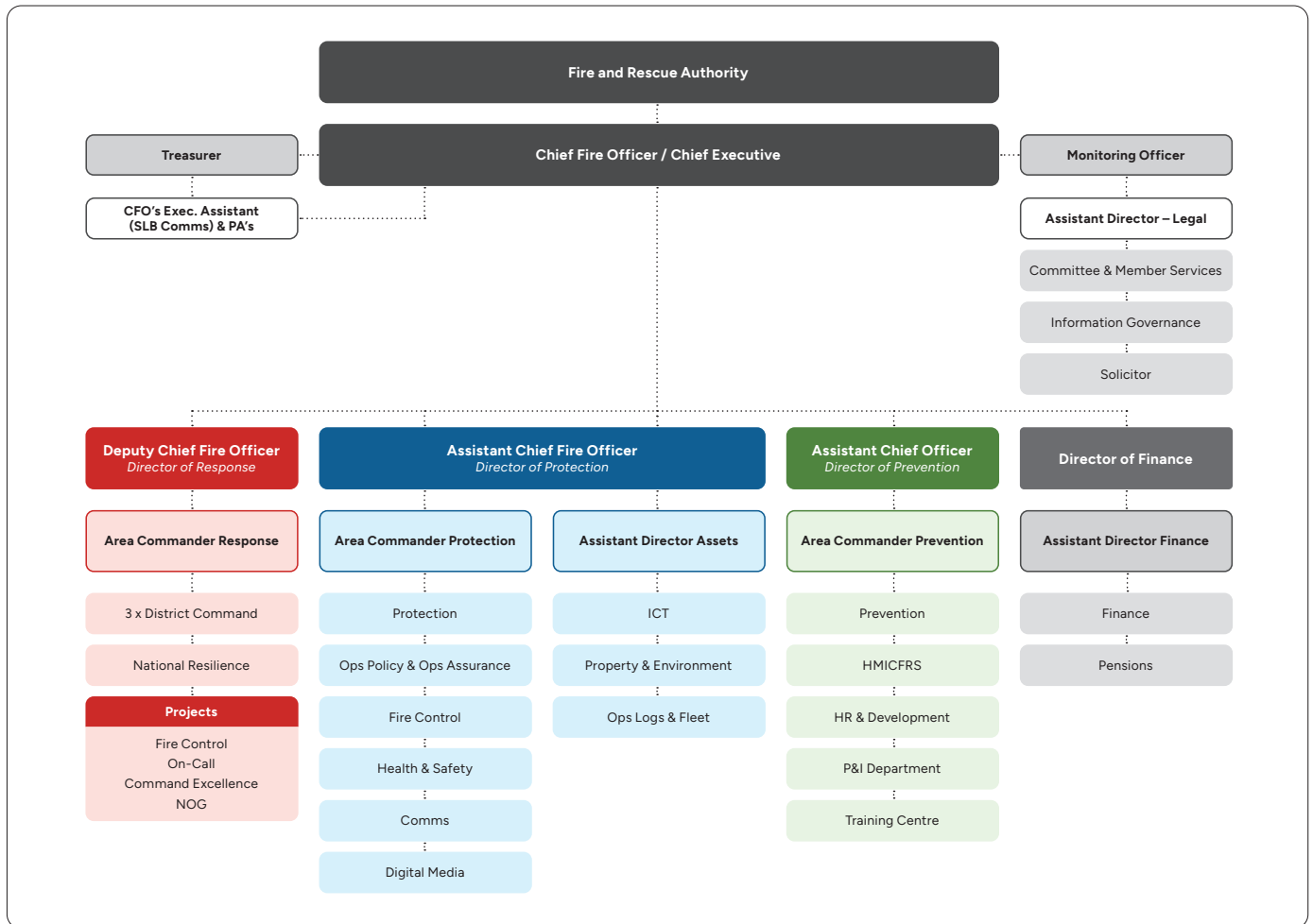
What we do every day

As one professional team we will work hard every day to deliver high quality, sustainable services to our communities.



Service Structure

Over the year, we made a number of small but significant adjustments to our structure. The revised structure reflects the important focus on our three primary functions: Response, Protection and Prevention. Each of these functions has a dedicated Director with a clear line of responsibility and accountability to lead and deliver their respective Core Strategies. The structure helps to embed the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services and also aligns with the way HMICFRS inspect and assess the Service. You can find more about each Department on the [Service website](#).



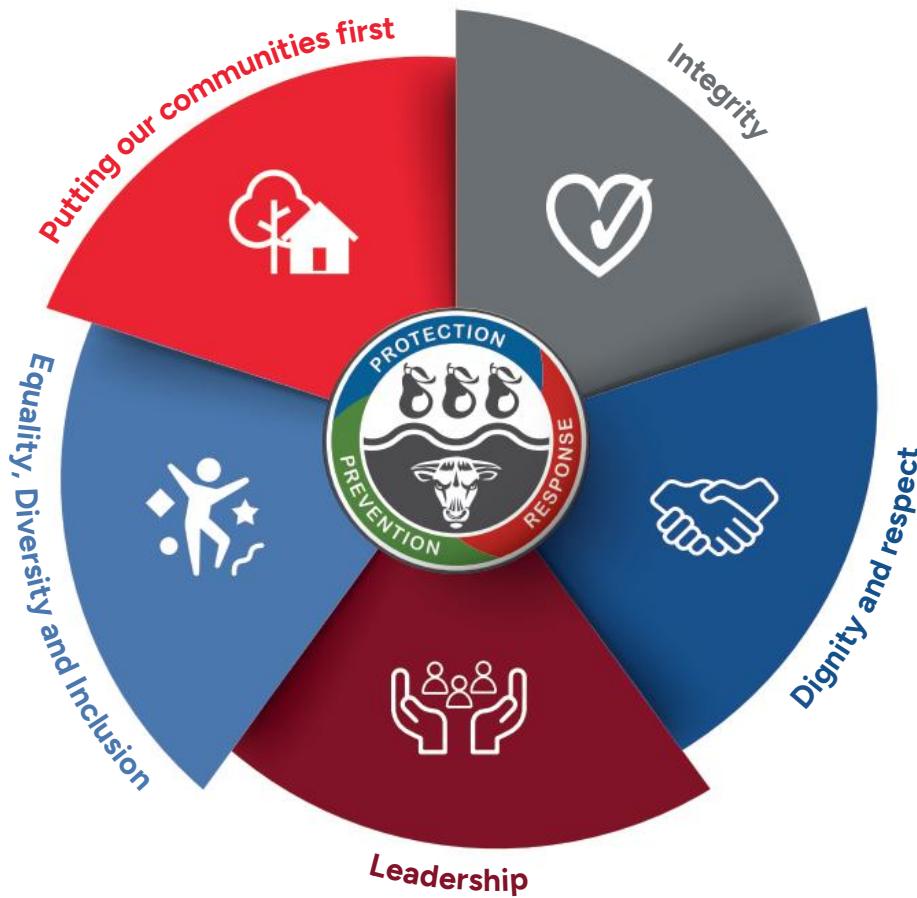
Our Ethical Principles



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



Over the year, we have continued to embed the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#) in England. Jointly developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Code consists of five clear ethics principles, which provide the basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. By adopting the Code as our guiding set of values, we are committed to championing ethical behaviours that help to improve organisational culture and workforce diversity, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.



Putting our communities first



We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity



We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect



We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership



As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.

Our Work in 2022-23

During 2022-23, our 24/7 emergency response service dealt with fires, road traffic collisions, flooding and many other emergencies. This year, we saw a 9% increase in the overall number of incidents we attended, rising from 7,477 in 2021-22 to 8,137 in 2022-23. Not surprisingly given the record-breaking heatwave over the summer months, much of the increase related to a 22% increase in the number of fires we attended, of which we saw a 39% increase in outdoor fires. While there was a 31% increase in flooding incidents during the year, the overall number of Special Service incidents attended only rose by 1%. We also saw a 7% increase in False Alarm calls attended.

Focus on Operational and Organisational Excellence

Our aim is to drive excellence in ourselves and in everything we do, so we can deliver a highly professional service and maintain high standards.

Over the year, we continued to focus on driving excellence throughout the Service. We have featured this in our [Annual Service Review 2022-23](#), but some examples are also worth noting here:

Response

- Small but significant changes in our operational approach, such as more assertive firefighting tactics, are helping to deal with incidents quickly, reducing damage and risk to life, and minimising our impact on businesses, communities and the environment.

- Following public consultation, a new Attendance Performance Measure (APM) was adopted, which will help to give residents a more realistic picture of the response times they can expect in the event of an emergency incident, and will give fire and rescue crews an opportunity to review occasions when attendance falls outside expected response times.

Protection

- Over 1,000 complex premises were inspected to ensure fire safety compliance.
- An additional 164 Fire Safety inspections were carried out by operational crews, and ambitious targets have been set to increase this number in future years.
- Implemented new Fire Safety legislation, supporting safety in commercial premises including high-rise buildings.

Prevention

- All areas of improvement set by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) were fully addressed, ensuring we can provide an even better prevention service to the public.
- The launch of a new Home Fire Safety Visit programme saw a substantial increase in targeted checks rising from 3,301 in 2021-22 to 6,519 in 2022-23.
- Introduced an internal quality assurance process in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council's Person-Centred Framework, helping to improve standards and ensuring consistent high quality levels when carrying out Home Fire Safety Visits.

Workforce

- Adoption of the national Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services has provided a clear, consistent message to our communities about the ethical standards they can expect from us.
- Results from an excellent response to a Staff Survey carried out at the beginning of 2023 show that HWFRS is considered a good place to work and is creating a positive employee experience. Employees felt proud to work for HWFRS, enjoy working with colleagues, and most feel that they belong at HWFRS, including employees from under-represented staff groups. The feedback will be used to further develop engagement within the workforce, linking into wider cultural organisational development work.



- In spring 2023 a comprehensive Cultural Audit was carried out by ioda, independent research and training specialists. There was an exceptional response to the audit and most respondents highlighted that HWFRS is on a forward-thinking, positive and progressive equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) journey. HWFRS was seen as a good service with people who understand its values and care about the organisation and the communities we work with/for. Most felt able to challenge inappropriate behaviour and all respondents had a good understanding of the Core Code of Ethics. The full findings, including action points and areas for development, can be found in the Cultural Audit documents on the Service website.
- Commissioned a high-quality EDI training programme to be delivered to all staff during 2023-24. The training has been developed to integrate the findings of the Staff Survey and the Cultural Audit, and aims to help staff to grow and develop their skills about EDI and also how we can all keep improving our culture and behaviours in the workplace.

Value for Money

- Significant progress on major projects, representing an investment of around £16 million in key infrastructure providing modern, high quality facilities for the Service.

Governance Assurance

Making sure our governance arrangements are delivering our services effectively and efficiently



The Service's governing body is Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority. It is made up of 25 local councillors, 6 from Herefordshire Council and 19 from Worcestershire County Council. The West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner may also attend in a non-voting capacity.

The Authority:

- makes sure the Service carries out its duties in relation to fire prevention, fire safety, firefighting and rescues, including road traffic collisions and other emergencies such as flooding, as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- makes sure due regard is given to the terms and requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, as updated in 2018
- sets the budget and approves the Service's overall direction
- appoints the Chief Fire Officer and makes sure the Service has the right people, equipment and training to deliver their services effectively and efficiently in the best interests of the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The Authority normally meets four times a year and is supported by three main committees. Most meetings are held in public.

Full details of the Authority, committees, meetings, reports and decisions can be found on [Fire Authority](#) page of the Service website.

The Authority has a responsibility to ensure its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. This is supported by a [Code of Corporate Governance](#) setting out how good governance will be promoted.

The main elements of the governance framework are:

- [Constitution](#) – defines the roles and responsibilities of the Authority, Committees, Members and Officers;
- [Audit and Standards Committee](#) – reviews arrangements for identifying and managing the Authority's business risks and the approval of policies;
- **Monitoring Officer** – provides advice on the scope of powers and responsibilities of the Authority, and has a statutory duty to ensure lawfulness and fairness of decision making;
- **Chief Financial Officer (Treasurer)** – ensures the sound administration of the financial affairs of the Authority as required by the statutory duties under the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Account and Audit (England) Regulations 2015;
- **Code of Conduct** – including the Ten General Principles of Public Life.

Each year, the Authority prepares an Annual Governance Statement setting out how it meets its responsibilities. The [2022-23 Annual Governance Statement](#) provides assurance in relation to seven Core Principles:

- A.** Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law;
- B.** Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
- C.** Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;
- D.** Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
- E.** Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
- F.** Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management;
- G.** Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The Annual Governance Statement is prepared in accordance with the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016' published by CIPFA/SOLACE. As part of this, the Audit & Standards Committee considers reviews of corporate governance arrangements to ensure that the Authority's governance arrangements are working correctly and are relevant to the current environment.

No significant governance issues have been identified at this time and the Annual Governance Statement was signed off by the Chairman of the Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive on 19 April 2023.

Audit

During the year, the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS) carried out a number of audits in relation to Corporate Governance and System/Management Arrangements. These audits help to ensure our systems and controls are adequate, effective and functioning correctly.

The audits examined the Training Centre Droitwich, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Estates, ICT, Stores & Equipment and Fleet. These audits found no limited or below assurance areas and no high priority recommendations were made. The [Internal Audit Annual Report 2022-23](#) is available on the Service website for further information.

Information Governance

The Service collects and maintains information and data to enable us to carry out our statutory duties. The Information Governance service within the Legal Services team ensures information is kept secure and is used fairly and properly. The [Access to Information](#) page of the Service website provides more information, including links to the Freedom of Information and Data Protection acts.

Further information can be found in the [Fire Authority Document Library](#).

Financial Assurance

Ensuring our financial arrangements are in order and providing good value for money



The Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring public money is properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively. To ensure that sound financial management policies are in place, the Authority adheres to and implements the provisions of the Financial Regulations.

The Regulations cover all aspects of financial management and planning, the management of risks and resources, financial systems and processes, arrangements for joint working and delegation limits.

Assurance is provided through an Annual Statement of Accounts. The Statement is designed to provide a true and fair view of the financial position, including a statement of income and expenditure. In preparing the Statement, the Treasurer follows the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

It was intended that the Authority's draft unaudited 2022-23 Statement of Accounts would be available on our website by 31 May 2023. However, due to the late completion of the audit of the [Statement of Accounts 2021-22](#) and information still being outstanding from external organisations, it has not been possible to achieve this date. The audit has now been completed by Grant Thornton UK LLP (external auditors), and confirmation has been given that the accounting treatment adopted by the Authority is correct. However, a national issue surrounding accounting for pensions has emerged, which could impact on the figures in the financial statements.

As soon as all relevant information is available to the Authority, the accounts will be completed and a revised target date for the Authority's draft, unaudited 2022-23 Statement of Accounts will be available on the Service's [Accounts](#) webpage.

Audit

The Fire Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources is subject to internal and external audit by Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service and Grant Thornton UK LLP respectively.

Internal audit worked with external audit to help to avoid duplication of effort, provide adequate coverage for the 2022/23 financial year so that an internal audit opinion can be reached, and support external audit by carrying out reviews in support of the accounts opinion work. The internal audit covered the core financial areas of Accountancy and Finance Systems: Main Ledger (including budgetary control and bank receipts), Creditors (accounts payable), Debtors (accounts receivable), and Payroll & Pensions. All areas examined provided assurance, including full assurance for three core financial areas, and there were no limited or below assurance areas reported.

The Authority is satisfied that its financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement of the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. In addition, the key financial systems are continually reviewed by the Internal Auditor. There were no major weaknesses identified in the 2022-23 financial year.

Budget

Each year, the Authority approves a Medium-Term Financial Plan, which sets out the resources needed to deliver our services, and agrees and annual budgets. Budget Monitoring reports have been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee throughout the year and have shown that the Authority's finances continue to be well controlled. The increased cost of pay settlements in 2022/23 is likely to lead to budget pressures in the medium term. However these are well understood and a report with options for future efficiencies will be brought forward for consideration at a future date.

The budget for 2022-23 was £37.0 million and a summary of how it was spent is included in the [Annual Service Review 2022-23](#). The annual cost to the average Council Tax Band D household was £89.40 or less than 25 pence per day. Full details of the budget and [Council Tax](#) are available on the Service website.

Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023-24

Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework, each stand-alone Fire Authority was required to publish and submit to the Home Office an Efficiency and Productivity Plan. As part of the joint Home Office/ Local Government Association/National Fire Chiefs Council submission to the last Comprehensive Spending Review, the fire and rescue sector committed to providing 2% efficiencies in non-pay budgets and a 3% increase in Wholetime Firefighter productivity.

The Efficiency and Productivity Plan sets out the ongoing financial challenge currently faced by the Authority and illustrates the recent transformation savings that have been delivered by the Service. Key areas covered in the Plan include the Budget & Medium-Term Financial Plan, Reserves, Precept, Collaboration, Asset Management & Investment in Technology, Resourcing, Efficiency and Productivity. The [Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023-34](#) is available on the Service website.

Transparency

In addition to ensuring prudent financial management, the Authority is committed to promoting openness and accountability in local decision making, public spending and democratic processes. As part of this, it has adopted a [Transparency Code of Practice](#), which includes details of payments for goods and services to external bodies and suppliers above £250, details of salaries, allowances and expenses paid to staff and Members.

Operational Assurance

Organising our services to make sure risks are well understood and we have the right resources in place to tackle them effectively and safely.



Within the statutory responsibilities set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other strategic legislation and guidance, we organise our services to make sure our firefighters and communities are kept as safe as possible.

We aim to provide the best training and equipment for our firefighters to do their jobs safely and ensure they have the best incident command and operational leadership available. We continually assess the level of risk across the two counties and use this to help organise how we target our prevention and protection services.

Our overall plans are set out in the [Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25](#) (CRMP) and our Core Strategies; [Response](#), [Protection](#) and [Prevention](#). Together, they represent our four-year strategy for keeping people, their homes, communities and the environment safe. Supporting them are a host of enabling strategies and plans, including the [People Strategy](#) and the annual Medium-Term Finance Plan. The strategies and plans are available on the Service website, and the following diagram highlights the main areas of focus for our work.



In the [Annual Service Plan 2022-23](#), we set out a number of objectives we wanted to achieve over the year. The objectives were designed to provide a priority focus on what we were going to do in 2022-23 towards delivering our Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 and our Response, Protection and Prevention Core Strategies.

The [Annual Service Review 2022-23](#) sets out how we achieved these objectives, which covered a wide range of operational and organisational priority actions for the year.

Operational Audits

The Service continued its programme of Operational Assurance audits throughout the year. These audits help to ensure that all operational staff maintain their skills, knowledge and competence in carrying out their critical roles. It covers the three main areas of assurance: preparedness, response and learning.

There are procedures in place to ensure the maintenance of up-to-date Competence Training Records (CTR) including the completion of safety critical training courses. Key areas covered during the year were Practical Skills audits ensuring both technical knowledge and practical awareness of guidance and operating procedures in areas such as using breathing apparatus, fire behaviour, trauma, high-rise incidents, water rescue, ladders and pumping procedures.

There is also an ongoing programme of Station Assurance audits. These audits cover a wide range of areas: CTR, fire control, health & safety, information governance, intel, operational logistics and fleet, operational policy, personnel management, prevention, protection and station records. They also ensure the completion of Active Incident Monitoring and development plans. Districts also carry out station exercises, often with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, in areas such as Incident Command and Road Traffic Collision incidents.

Further operational learning is gained through post-incident debriefs, maintaining knowledge of National Operational Guidance (NOG) and learning from safety events and exercises through National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL). These often cover major operations with Ambulance, Police, other Fire and Rescue Services and other partners in a range of exercises such as counter terrorism, rail incidents, high-rise incidents and carbon monoxide incidents.

Findings continue to be very positive in relation to practical and technical abilities and in competencies demonstrated, and any outstanding actions required are noted and followed up.

Risk Management Framework

The Service's Risk Management Framework is designed to ensure that the Authority identifies strategic risks and applies the most appropriate and cost-effective control mechanisms to manage those risks wherever possible. It also provides a robust audit trail showing how the Service has considered and mitigated those risks, should an issue be subject to scrutiny.

The Service maintains a Strategic Risk Register (SRR) as an overarching document highlighting the highest impact risks to the Service. Risks are continually monitored and reviewed by departments in their departmental risk registers. Most identified risks can be eliminated or reduced through control measures, but higher or more prevalent risks may be elevated to the SRR.

Where appropriate, the SRR may also incorporate wider risks identified at a national level through the UK's National Security and Risk Assessment and at a regional level through the Community Risk Register prepared by the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum, of which the Service is a member.

Directory of Assurance Documents

Governance

- [Annual Governance Statement 2022-23](#)

Other key governance documents can be found by following the links on the [Transparency Code of Practice](#) page of the Service website.

Key legislation includes:

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018](#)
- [Local Government Act 1999](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#)
- [Crime and Disorder Act 1988](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022](#)
- [Building Safety Act 2022](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Finance

- [Annual Statement of Accounts 2021-22](#)
- [Link to previous Statements of Account](#)
- [Budget and Precept 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan, Precept Appendices 1-9, Appendix 10 Statement of Prudential Indicators](#)
- [Internal Audit Annual Report 2022-23](#)
- [Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023-24](#)

Other key finance documents can be found by following links on the [Your Right To Know page](#) of the Service website.

Other legislation and guidance includes:

- [Local Government Finance Act 1988](#)
- [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#)
- [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#)
- [Public Sector Internal Audit Standards](#)
- [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#)
- [Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountability \(CIPFA\) Codes of Practice](#)

Operations

The Fire Authority publishes reports on all its services, including the overall strategy, operational performance, policies and financial plans. Key documents can be found on the [Publications page](#) of the Service website and through the [Publication Scheme](#).

Links include:

- [Annual Service Review 2022-23](#) and the [Annual Service Plan 2023-24](#)
- [Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025](#)
- [Cultural Audit 2023](#)

The Service website also provides a wide range of information about the Fire Authority and the services delivered by the Fire and Rescue Service. The [Home page](#) will take you to all the links including essential Safety and Advice information and guidance, News and Events and recruitment opportunities through our Join Us page.

Contact us

We always welcome any views or comments on our reports and plans, so if you want to contact us about any issues, please visit our website at www.hwfire.org.uk where you will find full contact details along with links to further information about our services and activities.

If you have any general enquiries, please call 0345 122 4454 or email us at info@hwfire.org.uk.

You can also follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook @hwfire

Alternatively, you can write to us at:
Hereford & Worcester FRS Headquarters
Hindlip Park
Worcester
WR3 8SP

If you would like this information in an alternative language or format such as large print or audio, please contact us on 0345 122 4454

Your right to know: Access to information

A great deal of information on the Service is available in the public domain through our Publications Scheme and Transparency links on the Service website. If you need assistance, Service staff will help you to obtain the information you want, unless disclosure would be against the law.

You have a right to request information under the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#), which gives you a general right of access to recorded information held by the Service. The Act is designed to ensure greater accountability, as well as to promote a more open culture. If you want to know what personal information is held about you, you can make a request under the [Data Protection Act 1998](#). To find out more, please click on the [Access to Information](#) link.



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Report of the Assistant Chief Officer/Director of Prevention

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q1 2023 / 2024

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Authority notes the progress achieved towards addressing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. In particular that:

- i) 86% of the actions in the Improvement Plan are now complete***
- ii) work continues during Q2 to progress the remaining actions through to completion***
- iii) this report will be the final update on the Areas for Improvement highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report dated 15 December 2021***

Introduction and Background

2. At the Fire Authority meeting on 15 February 2022, Members received a paper advising that the Service was developing an Improvement Plan to address the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021.
3. Progress against the Improvement Plan is reported on quarterly to address the 22 Areas for Improvement (AFI) identified during the inspection.

HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Progress Update

4. The delivery of the Improvement Plan is overseen by members of the Performance and Information (P&I) team, who meet regularly with senior managers responsible for each Area for Improvement to prepare updates on actions proposed and completed. The P&I team also ensure that actions carried out are fully evidenced and available for evaluation and audit. The latest update, covering up to the end of August 2023, is attached to this report (see Appendix 1).
5. The Strategic Leadership Board have oversight of the improvement plan and are provided with quarterly updates.

6. The update shows that action plans are progressing to address areas identified within the three themes (pillars) covered in the HMICFRS report:
 - Effectiveness,
 - Efficiency
 - People

7. There has been notable progress made against the Improvement Plan in Q1 across all three pillars which has seen a number of actions progressed to completion. As of the end of Q1 2023/24, the Service has completed 86% of the actions detailed in the Improvement Plan – up from 62% in Q4. Work continues during Q2 to progress the remaining actions through to completion.

8. HMICFRS inspectors attended the Service in June and July 2023 to carry out the 2023 inspection. All fieldwork and staff interviews have now taken place. We anticipate receiving the report into their inspection in October / November 2023, after which any areas for improvement will be considered and actions will be identified and included in the next Improvement Plan.

9. This report will be the final update on the Areas for Improvement highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report dated 15 Dec 2021. The next update presented to the Authority will be on the outcome and report of the 2023 inspection.

Conclusion/Summary

10. Members are recommend to note the progress made in the delivery of the HMICFRS Improvement Plan.

11. Subject to any matters arising following consideration by the Fire Authority, the update will be published on the Service website.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	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 identified in the Improvement Plan.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	Actions proposed in the Improvement Plan are likely to have an impact on both the CRMP and the MTFP. All proposals directly align with discharging the three core strategies, and align with the Core Code of Ethics.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify	Any risks associated with proposals will be assessed through the Improvement Plan.

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

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – FRA HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2021-22; Update Q1 2023/24



HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2021/22

Updated: Q1 2023-24





During April to May 2021, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspected Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS). The Service was selected as one of the first services to be inspected in round 2. This was the third inspection of HWFRS following the first inspection in July 2018 and the Covid-19 inspection during the autumn 2020.

The inspectors from HMICFRS carried out their in-depth review of our Service, focusing on how effective and efficient we are and how well we look after our people. Their report was published in December 2021, and this is [the link to the report](#).

The inspection considered three main questions for this cycle of inspections:

Effectiveness – *the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection, and response);*

Efficiency - *the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with other emergency services);*

People – *how well the service looks after its people (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce, and develops leadership and service capability).*

The Service was found to be 'requiring improvement' when considering effectiveness, efficiency and people. The inspection report highlighted 22 Areas for Improvement (AFI) and recommended that action be taken to address them. Therefore, 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.

This report provides an update of progress in implementing the Improvement Plan up to the end of August 2023 against the identified AFI's noted in the HMICFRS report.

HMICFRS Inspection – Improvement Plan 2021-22 Update: Q1 2023-24

Effectiveness – ES1	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure that the aims and objectives of prevention, protection and response activity are clearly defined in its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Publish Core Strategies for Protection, Prevention and Response linked to delivery of the CRMP, communicate across Service and develop understanding.	Complete
Business Planning cycle and process embedded across Service linked to delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and three Core Strategies. Digital tracking process set up electronically to monitor progress.	Complete
CRMP Fire Standard to be analysed and a gap analysis produced and shared with the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). Learning defined and mapped into clear recommendations for implementation into the new CRMP process for launch in 2025.	Complete
Develop an evidential based resource to risk assessment. Clearly identifying areas of risk, resource and people assets that can be utilised.	Complete
Key Performance Indicators (KPI) identified and agreed specifically linked to delivery of the CRMP and Core Strategy. An approach to be mapped out to identify trends and exception reporting.	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>

Effectiveness – ES2

Area for Improvement

The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date temporary risk information.

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

A risk management system procurement process to be initiated.

Complete

Data cleanse of data in preparation for transfer to a new system to be commenced.

Q3 2023/24

Upon procurement of a new system, a comprehensive training and communication programme to support embedding of a new system to commence.

Q3 2023/24

Explore development of an internal and external audit process of the information held within the Service.

Complete

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Protection

Effectiveness – ES3

Area for Improvement

The service should evaluate its prevention work so that it understands what works.

HWFRS Action Proposed

There will be a process to ensure targeting of prevention activity meets the needs of the community.	Complete
A clear reporting framework on the performance and evaluation of prevention activity will be developed.	Complete
A quality assurance process for Home Fire Safety Visits will be agreed.	Complete
Investigate a body to conduct a peer review or external assessment of delivery against the prevention Cause of Concern Action Plan.	Complete
The University of Worcester Evaluation of Safe and Well Visit Report will be reviewed and suggested improvements to delivery / recommendations mapped out into an action plan.	Complete
Working with the Corporate Communications department develop and publish a Prevention Communications Plan and introduce a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaigns to ensure continuous improvement.	Complete
The Service will undertake an annual process to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention activity utilising available appropriate methodologies.	Complete

Strategic lead

Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention

Effectiveness – ES4

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure that it has an effective quality assurance process in place, so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Performance appraisals with employees in the Technical Fire Safety team of the Protection Department are being booked in and a peer review of audits for the purposes of quality assurance to be scheduled aligned with these dates.	Complete
Technical Fire Safety quality assurance proforma finalised.	Complete
Agree an external peer review schedule with neighbouring Services in order to quality assure processes.	Complete
Experian data being merged with Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) data to ensure Protection Services applied equitably.	Complete
Conduct external peer review quality assurance process, and consider recommendations.	Complete

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>
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Effectiveness – ES5

Area for Improvement	The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce the risk.
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
HWFRS to ensure its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the premises at the highest risk.	Complete
Fully complete alignment to the NFCC competency framework for Fire Safety Regulators.	Complete
Arrange specialist legal training for L4 Diploma staff (to include prosecution case studies)	Complete
Finalise prosecution support agreement with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and Telford and Wrekin Council legal services (We are no longer pursuing this agreement)	Complete

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>
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Effectiveness – ES6

Area for Improvement

The service should ensure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms.

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Commence a review of how we respond to unwanted fire signals.

Complete

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Protection

Effectiveness – ES7

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure its Response Strategy provides the most appropriate response for the public in line with its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Response Strategy linked to the risks in the CRMP published.	Complete
Response annual and three-year Business Plan (linked to delivery of the Response Strategy) finalised.	Complete
Special appliances review report and evaluation finalised.	Complete
Commence the process to identify an external agency to provide risk data mapping.	Complete
Prepare a report on the review of Water First Responders capability across the Service (Response)	Complete

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Response</i>
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Effectiveness – ES8

Area for Improvement

The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Compare the number and types of incidents requiring a debrief against returns for the last 12 months and identify potential themes and target areas to improve organisational learning and adoption of debriefing.

Complete

Identify replacement AIM & Debrief system options.

Complete

Review current practises and procedures for the triggering of and submitting debriefs.

Complete

Develop a communication proforma to improve organisational awareness of the Debrief process and its outcomes to improve organisational adoption.

Complete

Develop robust sharing mechanisms to ensure learning is shared to multi agency and regional partners incorporating JOL & NOL systems.

Complete

Review current policy and identify potential options to improve on scene Active Incident Monitoring (AIM) & Debrief processes.

Complete

Implement new AIM & Debrief systems

Q3 2023/24

Implement an update monitoring process to improve on scene monitoring.

Complete

Introduce an assurance process to assure the adoption and use of the AIM & Debrief systems and processes.

Q3 2023/24

Publish a Debrief report service wide on a quarterly basis

Complete

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Protection

Effectiveness – ES9

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance, including joint and national learning, and put in place a plan to do so.	
HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Enrol Digital Training Project Team		Complete
Integrate new Learning Management System (LMS)		Complete
Develop eLearning suite referenced to National Operational Learning (NOG)		Q3 2024/25
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>	

Effectiveness – ES10

Area for Improvement

The service should ensure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist incident, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

HWFRS Action Proposed

Target Date

Develop presentation covering responsibilities of FRS' and specifically non-specialist responders when attending potential Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTA) incidents. To include overview of statutory responsibilities This has been delayed due to the impact of the Commonwealth Games on regional NILO working.	Complete
Review of Pre-Determined Attendances (PDA's) for MTAs and other like incidents	Complete
National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer (NILO) Cadre to deliver presentation to all operational staff including Fire Control and Officer Groups	Complete
As part of Regional Group establish exercising programme with other Fire & Rescue Services' and responding agencies (Police/Ambulance)	Complete
Test knowledge and understanding through District exercising and assurance programme	Q4 2023/24

Strategic lead

Assistant Director: Response

Efficiency- EY1	
Area for Improvement	The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection, and response activities. This should reflect, and be consistent with, the risk and priorities set out in its CRMP.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Identify good/outstanding practice and conduct a gap analysis	Complete
Identify how we currently allocate resources to Prevention, Protection and Response	Complete
Apply the outcomes as part of the upcoming Risk Review workstream of the CRMP Project	Q3 2023/24
Identify organisational leads/key stakeholders for workforce resources across the three core strategies.	Complete
Conduct a supply analysis to understand current workforce headcount, skills and budget.	Complete
Conduct a demand analysis to project resources needed (headcount, skills, budget).	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Finance Director and Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>

Efficiency- EY2	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure there is a testing programme for its business continuity plans, particularly in high-risk areas of service.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Testing of fall-back arrangements for Fire Control involving all watches.	Complete
Incorporate business continuity questions into the station assurance process for 2022/23.	Complete
Develop an exercise program for station and department fall-back plans.	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>

Efficiency- EY3	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any future collaboration.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Work with National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) implementation officer to investigate what national good practice looks like. Ongoing.	Complete
Review and define collaboration with other Fire & Rescue Services' and other emergency services	Q3 2023/24
Evaluate benefits of Fire Control Project – to procure a system	Complete
Establish a process within areas of business planning to ensure collaboration is a key factor in planning and projects	Complete
Establish an evaluation process/tool for reviewing the effectiveness of collaboration on business planning, programmes and projects.	Q3 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i>

Efficiency- EY4	
Area for Improvement	The service should ensure that its fleet and estate strategies are regularly reviewed and evaluated to maximise potential efficiencies.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Provide draft / re-format existing Fleet Strategy to new format, and seek approval of SLB / P&R to publish.	Complete
Provide updated draft / re-format of existing Property Strategy dated 2018-23, and seek approval of SLB / P&R to publish	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Assets</i>

People – P1

Area for Improvement	The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours.
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Strategic Leadership Board visits for the year have been programmed with every watch and department	Complete
The Service will commission an external organisation to undertake a review of internal communications and provide recommendations for improvement.	Complete
Whole leadership meetings scheduled for the year every quarter.	Complete
The Service will commission a service wide inclusion training programme to further embed understanding of inclusion as a core element linked to values.	Complete
The Service will carry out a full staff survey and review the feedback received and implement changes as required.	Complete
The Service will fully implement the FRS Core Code of Ethics (CCoE).	Complete
The Service will develop a more regular method of surveying staff opinion and gathering feedback.	Complete

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>
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People – P2

Area for Improvement

The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.

HWFRS Action Proposed		Target Date
Review Appraisal template to include discussion prompt on secondary contracts and/or additional roles within the Service.		Complete
Establish a process to monitor compliance with the Secondary Employment policy.		Complete
Establish a method to monitor total working hours of those with secondary contracts and/or additional roles, to highlight when working hours are excessive.		Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>	

People – P3

Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it has a robust system in place to update and review its operational incident (analytical) risk assessments.
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Review current guidance for the completion of Analytical Risk Assessments (ARA).	Complete
Review training levels and provided training to crews to carry out ARA and the associated reviews.	Complete
Develop and introduce an assurance process to assure the completion of ARA's.	Complete

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>
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People – P4

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure itself that records for risk critical competencies, such as breathing apparatus, driving fire engines and incident command are accurate and up to date.		
HWFRS Action Proposed			Target Date
Complete audit of assurance processes.			Complete
Review fire control training to ensure recording of training is up to date.			Complete
Integrate a new learning management system to improve recording and monitoring of skills.			Q3 2023/24
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Director: Protection</i>		

People – P5

Area for Improvement	The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the Community Risk Management Plan.
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HWFRS Action Proposed	Target Date
Develop and publish a Workforce Planning Policy.	Complete
Review and evaluate workforce planning process to strengthen links with business planning cycle.	Complete
Develop Workforce Planning Toolkit for managers to support workforce planning at a departmental level.	Q2 2023/24

Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>
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People – P6

Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it has appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups.	
HWFRS Action Proposed		
		Target Date
	Identify and review current methods of engagement with staff (Refer to P1 actions).	Complete
	Ensure staff survey collates equality data to inform which groups are engaging and identify the best methods to do this in the future.	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>	

People – P7**Area for Improvement**

The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the appraisal review process.

HWFRS Action Proposed**Target Date**

Review current appraisal process (link with Training).

Complete

Establish completion rate reporting mechanism to monitor appraisal completion rates.

Complete

Implement identified amendments to appraisals process.

Complete

Publish refreshed appraisal toolkit for managers.

Complete

Develop appraisal training for managers.

Complete

Strategic lead*Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention*

People – P8	
Area for Improvement	The service should make sure it has mechanisms in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation.
HWFRS Action Proposed	
	Target Date
Establish clear links to appraisal process (career conversations) – links to P7.	Complete
Develop a talent management strategy.	Q3 2023/24
Develop a framework for managers to use to identify and develop high-performing staff (appraisal) in line with NFCC talent management toolkit.	Q4 2023/24
Review Promotion process.	Complete
Develop and implement temporary promotion toolkit for managers.	Q2 2023/24
Complete interim review of Aspiring Executive Leaders programme.	Complete
Scope out “Aspiring Leaders” programme for Middle Managers.	Complete
Strategic lead	<i>Assistant Chief Officer / Director of Prevention</i>

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)

Purpose of report

1. To provide Members with a review of Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS):
 - UwFS accounted for 44.4% of all incidents attended by HWFRS over the past 3 years (2019-22).
 - Of the 28 Fire & Rescue services inspected by HMICFRS in tranche 1 and 2 (2021/22), HWFRS was one of twelve Services where unwanted fire signals were identified as an area for improvement.
 2. To consider the benefits and disbenefits of attending in response to automatic fire alarms (AFAs); whether and to what extent this is a problem and provide a range of options for consideration.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that:

i) HWFRS continue the existing policy of maintaining an effective response to AFAs at all premises where there is a sleeping risk, including:

- *domestic dwellings; and*
- *other residential premises (FSEC Groups A and B) such as;*

Hospitals

Care Homes

Houses in multiple occupation

Hostels

Hotels;

ii) a risk-based call filtering methodology be introduced during the lower risk periods 08:00-18:00 hrs for AFAs at commercial premises within Fire Service Emergency Cover Groups C and D (but excluding public buildings and places of further education and schools) i.e.

Shops

Factories

Offices

Other Workplaces; and

iii) the previous decision taken in September 2013 of not charging for false alarm AFAs on the grounds that the cost of recovery measures were likely to exceed the income generated, be reaffirmed.

PART 1 - Introduction and Background

3. **Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)** are calls that very often will result in the classification of a 'false alarm' arising from automatic fire detection and fire alarm (AFA) systems, which are passed through to the Fire Service. These can originate from a variety of sources, such as; dedicated Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs), responsible persons at the premises, or from members of the public hearing a fire alarm activating and calling the Service.
4. **Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)** are electronic systems that range from commercial fitted systems to small domestic smoke detectors. They provide an effective means of giving early warning of a potential fire within a building, and are especially effective and useful when the building is unoccupied, or where the occupants may not be able to respond to, or detect in its early stages (e.g. illness, infirm, or asleep).
5. AFAs should be activated by smoke, however they can also be actuated in other ways by many common airborne materials that can be mistaken by the system for smoke, such as; dust, insects, steam, aerosol products, and also by electronic faults with the system. As a result, a high proportion (96.8%) of the calls to AFAs that HWFRS attend turn out to be classified as false alarms (an average of 2,465 incidents annually).
6. In HWFRS, false alarms over the past 3 years (2019-22) has accounted for 44.4% of all incidents attended, around 3.4% higher than other FRSs in England.
7. HMICFRS reported in their 2021 Tranche 1 inspection that HWFRS hasn't taken enough action to reduce a consistently high number of UwFSs. It gave the recommendation that 'the Service should ensure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms'. However this 'burden' does have some operational benefits, which HMICFRS are not taking into account in their judgement.
8. A comprehensive review of UwFS from 2009/10 to 2021/22 has been undertaken and considered by the Service's Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). This is available on the Service website at ([link here](#)) and members are encouraged to refer to this for further detailed analysis.

UwFS in HWFRS

9. On average, over the past 13 years the Service has attended around 2,547 AFAs annually, of which 96.8% (or 2,465 incidents) turn out to be a false alarm. AFAs which raise a genuine alarm include those that resulted from special service calls such as flooding, which account for 0.3% of AFAs (7 incidents annually), and fire which account for 2.9% of AFAs (approximately 75 incidents annually).
10. Those AFAs that ultimately result in fires vary in severity, from those that are extinguished prior to the HWFRS's attendance to those requiring HWFRS resources. Of the relatively small number of incidents where an AFA response was subsequently recorded as a fire:

- 68.9% or approximately 52 incidents annually occurred in dwellings/other residential premises,
 - 29.8% (around 23 incidents annually) occurred in non-residential premises, and
 - the remainder attributed to outdoor structures / vehicles.
11. During the 13-year period from 2009-22, an annual average of 10 casualties were reported at AFA incidents. 92% of these incidents where casualties were involved occurred in domestic dwellings and other residential premises (i.e. in Fire Service Emergency Cover categories A and B).
 12. In HWFRS during 2009-22, the vast majority of false alarm AFA incidents are responded to by wholetime station on duty crews, thus not incurring additional revenue pay costs for on-call staff. Over the last two years (2020-22) the average duration of an AFA including travel time has been 32 minutes 47 seconds. Annually, approximately 1347 hours are spent by crews attending AFAs, which turn out to be an unwanted fire signal.

HWFRS current approach to responding to AFAs

13. The current approach taken by the Service in response to all AFAs includes the mobilisation of normally only one appliance, usually at road speed, subject to life and known (Intel) risk.
 - Attendance (speed and weight) increases if the intelligence of premises and their risks indicates the need.
 - When a responsible person confirms any previous call as being a false alarm, there is a 'return en-route' policy, crews will not attend and will become immediately available and released from the incident.
14. During extreme (spate) conditions, e.g. during severe weather events, the Service has approved alternative mobilising guidance. Following call filtering, no attendance to any AFA can be made unless a fire is confirmed or unless it is a high-risk premises.
15. There are approximately 8 instances per month on average of repeat (3 or more) false alarm AFAs to the same premises. All of these are routinely followed up by Protection Fire Safety Inspectors to improve Fire Safety compliance and reduce UwFS, thus 'repeat offenders' are already being addressed. The sanction of non-attendance at these premises, unless a fire is confirmed, remains a viable option.
16. This current approach has observable benefits:
 - Risk reduction - on average over a 13-year period from 2009/10 to 2021/22, AFA incidents that resulted in a reported fire accounted for 1.1% (approximately 75 incidents per year) of the total annual incidents HWFRS attended.
 - Mobilisation of a single appliance to all AFAs ensures a timely response and intervention, without committing excessive resources. Additionally, Fire Control operators will re-route any fire engine attending an AFA call to a higher risk call if necessary, and if the fire engine going to the AFA is the nearest resource.

- The extant emergency driving graded response policy mitigates risk to the safety of crews and members of the public on the road, when travelling under blue-light emergency response conditions starting from a non-emergency response and allowing crews to scale-up the speed of response based on potential risk and information available.

Benefits of operational fire crews attending AFAs

17. There has been an increasing national stigma around responding to AFAs that has developed over years, which seems to imply that all calls to AFAs are purely a waste of time and resources; however, this is not necessarily a fair assessment. Whilst AFAs arguably make up too large a proportion of HWFRS operational response activity, there are a number of key benefits from attending these calls;
 - Attendance and therefore familiarisation at a range of premises that fire crews may not ever otherwise visit. This can lead to new Intel information being produced and finding previously unknown risks and processes that help crews prepare and respond better when a real incident occurs.
 - Attendance at commercial properties enables crews to evaluate fire safety measures and management in the event of fire, and pass concerns onto fire safety inspectors for further consideration.
 - Attendances at domestic premises for AFAs (46.6% annual average) enable crews to evaluate the need for Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs), identify vulnerable people that we may not otherwise be signposted to, and to assess whether there are any safeguarding concerns.
 - Attendance enhances topographical knowledge for crews of their local area, and increases Service visibility and contact in supporting communities and businesses.
 - Often AFAs are a result of genuine concern, or a system operating correctly and within operating parameters, therefore it is important that our communities respond to these alarms and do not ignore them, is often underpinned by the attendance of the Fire Service.
 - Many AFAs are at premises, which would be deemed to be a higher risk in the event of fire for loss of life, or from critical or highly important buildings (hospitals, heritage, schools etc.). Being able to tackle a fire early in the unlikely event it should occur could be the difference between a relatively minor repair and the entire loss of a building. Whilst a very low proportion, around 75 AFAs per year result in a fire where a fire engine is in attendance earlier than it would have been if the AFA had not been responded to.

Disbenefits of responding to AFAs

18. The consequences of responding to AFA's which subsequently turn out to be UwFS are:
 - AFAs can disrupt programmed activities such as prevention and protection visits or training.
 - AFAs incur running costs (fuel etc.).

- AFAs will on 2.6% of occasions incur salary costs for On-Call staff (estimated £5000 per annum).
- AFAs add to vehicle movements on our roads.

What other Services do

19. The HMICFRS Tranche 1 and 2 inspection reports noted other Services typically use a range of measures to reduce UwFS, including;
 - Consistent application of an UwFS policy.
 - An effective risk-based approach towards UwFS reduction.
 - Effective and consistent call filtering at Fire Control based on risk.
 - Working with businesses to highlight the importance to managing their alarm systems to prevent unwanted calls.
 - Working with Alarm Receiving Centres (ARC) and building owners to identify false alarm causes and seeing what can be done to reduce further unwanted activations.
 - Attendance where there is a reasonable belief a fire has broken out or where there is a risk to life.
 - Ability to recover costs for attendance at sites, which are unable or unwilling to reduce calls from UwFS.
20. These principles could be seen as 'best practice' and have been taken into consideration in preparing the recommendations in this report.
21. Nationally, none of those Services which were inspected by HMICFRS within Tranche 1 and 2 (2021-22) had a blanket non-attendance policy towards AFAs. Instead, using a risk-based approach, some Services have chosen to implement a non-attendance policy to certain premises during specific times of day, or to have an exemptions list of premises types where an attendance would be made. Call filtering is used to determine each response.

Call challenging / filtering

22. Call filtering or challenging has been noted by HMICFRS as an effective means through which to reduce UwFS, however it requires a consistent and clear application of policy to certain incident types and premises and requires individual Control staff to make decisions, and sometimes will vary the proposed response indicated by the mobilising system. Understandably, this requires a degree of confidence and skill, as well as a robust and trusted management policy to ensure the operator is adequately able to make these decisions under emergency response conditions.
23. Calls received from ARCs often lack information about the cause of the activation to accurately determine if the alarm is false, due to the ARC being a remote call handling and monitoring facility. In some circumstances where ARCs are not particularly effective and the premises has a higher degree of risk it may be simpler, quicker and safer to send a fire engine to the scene, especially if the occupant is vulnerable.

PART 2 - Options for Consideration

24. Option 1 - Continue to respond to all AFAs as at present

- This does not address the concerns identified by HMICFRS and would still leave the Service responding to an average 2,465 UwFS per annum. This option is therefore not recommended.

25. Option 2 - Implement a blanket policy of non-attendance at AFAs

- It has been noted above that none of the Services inspected by HMICFRS in Trances 1 and 2 have implemented such a blanket non-attendance policy.
- Of the average 2,547 AFAs received annually, approximately 3% (75 incidents) turn out not to be false alarms. Of these, an average 52 incidents are in dwellings or other residential properties and have accounted for an average of 10 casualties per annum. Whilst a blanket non-attendance policy would avoid a very significant number of UwFS, it would also leave vulnerable people at risk and would be a significant change in the services currently provided across both counties to our communities and businesses.
- Additionally, a recent Regulation 28 coroner's *report* to prevent future deaths published in 2022 highlighted that a residential premises, which was not connected to an ARC, contributed to a delay in attendance at a fatal fire.
- AFAs which resulted in injuries in premises with a sleeping risk suggest maintaining a 24/7 response (usually one fire engine at normal road speed) is proportionate at this current time.
- Whilst this is an option for Members to consider, it is not recommended by Officers that a blanket non-attendance policy be supported.

26. Option 3 - Introduce a risk-based call filtering methodology for specific categories of calls

Adopting a risk-based mobilising model towards AFAs using the nationally recognised FSEC premises risk groupings (see Table 1), would allow the Authority to determine and maintain a prompt response to higher risk premises, and those premises where a refined call filtering process may be applied.

Table 1: FSEC (Fire Service Emergency Cover) Risk Groupings for Property Types

Risk Groups (derived from the IRMP Note 4 and 17 FSEC Categories)				
Groups	Group A	Group B	Group C*	Group D
FSEC Code	Sleeping Unfamiliar	Sleeping Familiar and Licensed Premises	Public Unfamiliar	Workplace Familiar
A	Hospitals			
B	Care Homes			
C	HMO			
D		Flat		
E	Hostel			
F	Hotel			
G		Converted Flat		
H	Other Sleeping			
J			Further Education	
K			Public Building	
L		Licensed Premises		
M			School	
N			Shop	
P			Other Public Building	
R				Factory
S				Office
T				Other Workplace

*Note: Group C premises correspond to the following premises types;

- Public buildings
- Public Services
- Public Sporting Venues
- Public Places of Worship
- Public Places of Entertainment or Culture

27. Based on an evaluation of premises posing the greatest risk to life, it is reasonable to follow a nationally accepted understanding of risk as per the FSEC categorisation of premises types within Groups A and B, ‘sleeping and unfamiliar’ and ‘sleeping familiar and licenced premises’ (Table 1). These principles are extended to include maintaining a response towards all other premises where there is a sleeping risk (i.e. domestic premises).

28. Commercial premises without a sleeping risk represent those premises where the risk to life is lower based upon FSEC grouping and incident data. This would exclude those premises with heightened risk factors such as museums, heritage, and high public value.

29. It should be noted that;

- Maintaining a response to Public Buildings accounts for premises where there is the potential for large numbers of people to be present.

- Maintaining a response to places of further Education and Schools considers the risk to life of the young and vulnerable when occupied, but during the larger period where unoccupied it takes into account the community impact and social costs of the loss of a school building.

Refining this proposal further

30. Although risk-based call challenging methodology could in theory be applied 24/7, in practice it is likely to be most effective during the daytime, when premises are occupied and the existence or otherwise of a fire can be more readily ascertained by the occupants. Call-challenging in respect of empty premises is unlikely to be effective and so would in practice, still lead to a response being sent.
31. The following 9 response models have been considered and analysed based on historical data for FSEC Groups C and D (see table below).

Option	Enhanced call filtering time	Estimated annual reduction of UwFS	FSEC Group
3.1	09:00 - 17:00	269	C and D excluding public buildings and places of further education and schools.
3.2	08:00 - 18:00	332	
3.3	08:00 - 20:00	374	
3.4	24/7	576	
3.5	09:00 - 17:00	434	All C and D premises.
3.6	08:00 - 18:00	533	
3.7	08:00 - 20:00	597	
3.8	24/7	907	
3.9	No call filtering applied	0	Attend all FSEC groups

32. **Officers recommend Option 3.2 is approved;** that risk-based call filtering in response to AFAs between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 is adopted by the Fire Authority for Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) categories C and D, excluding public buildings and places of further education and schools. This would achieve an estimated annual reduction of 332 UwFS the Service attends. This is expected to result in a 37% reduction of attendance to UwFS for FSEC categories C and D premises, and a 13.5% reduction in the total UwFS attended annually by the Service. Fire Control operators will be trained to issue supportive advice to those properties not being attended as a result of this proposal.
33. Should the option above be approved the Service will ensure a range of measures are taken to warn and prepare those premises likely to be affected, alongside an increased level of support and information being delivered by Fire Control staff.

PART 3 - Cost Recovery for Attendance at Persistent False Alarm AFAs

34. In accordance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Service has the discretion to make a charge for reports of fire where:
- a) The report is of fire at premises that are not domestic premises;
 - b) The report is false;
 - c) The report is made as a direct or indirect result of warning equipment having malfunctioned or been mis-installed; and
 - d) There is a persistent problem with false reports of fire at the premises that are made as a direct or indirect result of warning equipment under common control having malfunctioned or been mis-installed.
35. The objective of recovering costs from premises, which persistently cause false alarms, is to promote better management of malfunctioning fire warning equipment. Where cost recovery measures prove ineffective, call-filtering measures should be considered.
36. It must be noted that there are currently no premises that could be classified as 'repeat offenders' within the Service area based on guidance concerning detector failure rates. A policy of charging for UwFS is therefore unlikely to be beneficial, other than as a potential deterrent to encourage better management of equipment.
37. In September 2013 the Fire Authority approved a policy of not charging for false alarm AFAs with the cost recovery measures likely to exceed the income generated. This approach was proportionate based on the limited number of problematic premises, and the potential administrative burden in applying a suitable policy.

Conclusion

38. The historical impact of UwFS in HWFRS has been extensively reviewed. With HMICFRS identifying that the Service should ensure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms, this review is timely and necessary.
39. A risk-based call filtering in response to AFAs between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 for Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) categories C and D, excluding public buildings and places of further education and schools, would achieve an estimated annual reduction of 332 UwFS the Service attends. This equates to 37% reduction of attendance to UwFS for FSEC categories C and D premises, and a 13.5% reduction in the total UwFS attended annually by the Service. This will allow the Service to determine and maintain a prompt response to higher risk premises (FSEC groups A and B), and reduce attendance at UwFS for FSEC groups C and D.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).</p>	<p>UwFS reduction and application of new policy via existing Protection staffing. Any agreements with ARCs affected by any change to mobilising will need to be considered.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link with current priorities and policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics).</p>	<p>UwFS links directly to the Services CRMP, and core Protection Strategy. Other links to consider; existing mobilising guidance / interim AFA policy amendments.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>Risks with respect to delayed attendances. Potential for fires resulting from AFAs. Mitigated by targeting and call filtering commercial non-sleeping premises. Communication strategy to commercial premises.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).</p>	<p>Data protection around premises / casualty data within reports.</p>

Background papers: Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, April 2023 ([link here](#)).

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Fire Alliance Fire Control Project Update

Purpose of report

1. To update the Fire Authority on progress of the Fire Alliance Fire Control Project.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the decision to award the contract for a new joint fire control system in partnership with Shropshire FRS, Cleveland FRS and County Durham & Darlington FRS to Motorola, following a competitive procurement exercise, be noted and approved.

Introduction and Background

2. At the FRA meeting on 15 February 2022 Members approved the utilisation of funding against the Fire Control reserve to secure an appropriate replacement command and control system.
3. Subsequently the Alliance Board approved a project to procure a jointly funded Command and Control system able to work across both Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) areas from 2 sites (Telford and Hindlip).
4. In October 2022 the project was re-scoped following an approach from Cleveland (CFB) and County Durham and Darlington (CD&D) who asked us to consider involving them in the procurement.

Progress to date

5. In January 2023, HWFRS commenced a full procurement process, acting as the lead authority on behalf of all four Services.
6. Following a rigorous evaluation of submissions by representatives from all four Fire and Rescue Services, the panel recommended to the Chief Fire Officers that the contract be awarded to Motorola Solutions.
7. Motorola's system offers a number of improvements such as the integration of WHAT3WORDS, the ability to transfer incident details electronically between control rooms and other agencies, the ability to accurately pinpoint the location of callers who are using mobile phones and artificial intelligence to give control staff an estimate as to the truthfulness of a caller which would encourage a

more robust challenge, potentially reducing the number of hoax calls attended.

8. Motorola will provide a single system for all four control rooms which will be hosted in their secure resilient data centres which would be accessed from each control through a secure internet link.
9. On a day to day basis each control room will handle calls and mobilise resources for their own Service area.
10. All four control rooms normally operate with three staff on duty, but one of the advantages of having a single system is that whenever any of the control rooms requires additional assistance they can immediately support one another expanding the pool of staff able to deal with incidents in any of the Service areas to twelve. This could be for major incidents, spate calls such as widespread flooding or multiple calls requiring the staff to provide fire survival guidance.
11. As Motorola are also providing updated systems on the Fire Appliances, linked directly to the fire control system, it will also further support the recommendations from incidents such as Grenfell and Kerslake as all the information in the control rooms will be shared in real time with the crews at the incidents. The exchange of information between the fire crews, fire control and senior officers will be much faster and accurate as the systems are all linked so will use direct messaging rather than voice to pass information back and forth.
12. Another advantage of sharing the system across four Fire Services is a considerable reduction in set up and running costs for the system itself. Further cost savings will be realised through freeing up building space as there will no longer be a need to maintain secondary control rooms and all the hardware will be removed from Fire and Rescue Service premises.
13. Motorola have already delivered this system into individual Fire Services such as Bedfordshire and Essex, but the very real collaboration between the four Fire and Rescue Services, being led by HWFRS, will be the first of its kind, which not only brings greater resilience but also affordability, allowing the communities of HWFRS to benefit from the improvements that can be achieved through access to the latest technology.

Summary

14. The replacement system will provide a more reliable, flexible and resilient product with increased functionality to better support the work of the control staff, and streamline the flow of information between the control rooms and operational crews which mitigates risk to firefighters and the public.
15. By working in partnership with Cleveland and County Durham Fire Authorities, the Fire Alliance has not only been able to make significant cost savings which allows us to provide the benefits of the most up to date technology to better support our communities, but has also improved our ability to scale up

operations to deal with multiple calls and major incidents.

16. The new software on fire appliances allows real time information sharing between control rooms, the incident ground and senior officers.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Budget implications already agreed and approved by the Authority
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	Links to delivery of the CRMP and Core strategies
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Not required at this stage of the project
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Wide consultation has been carried out with all stakeholders
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not required at this stage of the project
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	DPIAs are all aligned to current standards and Codes of Compliance for the current system and will be refreshed when the data transfer happens against the project timeline.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 19 July 2023, 10:30

Chairman: Mr M Hart

Vice-Chairman: Mr A Amos

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr B Brookes, Mr B Clayton, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr M Hart

0282 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Boatright-Greene, Cllr Hardman, Cllr McVey, Cllr R Morris, Cllr Toynbee.

0283 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0284 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

0285 Confirmation of Minutes

The Treasurer confirmed that at the meeting on 19th April 2023, he had advised that the Audit of the 2021/22 accounts was finally complete. However, the Auditors have since indicated that as they were late signing off the report, the valuation of LGPS pension liabilities should, in their view, be updated and the accounts amended accordingly.

The Actuaries to the LGPS have stated that, in their opinion, the liabilities have not changed, but there will be a further delay whilst the Treasurer provides the Auditor with further evidence to justify the approach.

The Chairman enquired how much time this was taking to deal with and the cost to the public.

The Treasurer confirmed that not a large amount was being spent on this issue, but it would cause a delay in producing the accounts for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0286 Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23

Helen Tiffney from Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with an update on the delivery of the Internal Audit annual programme for 2022/23.

Members noted the Internal Audit Annual report 2021/22, that the audit plan had provided an assurance level of 'full' for three core financial areas, no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations had been made.

The Chairman commented that it was good to hear that there were no concerns.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Internal Audit Charter and that the audit plan delivered in 2022/23 had provided an assurance level of "full" for three core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations made.

0287 Equality Objectives 2021-2025 Update for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022-2023

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer updated Members on Equality Objectives for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2022/23.

Since the report was published, the report of the cultural review undertaken by Dr D Willoughby had been published and circulated to all Members.

A number of the areas highlighted as amber, are closer to green. Training as mentioned in the report by Dr Willoughby is already being rolled out across the Authority.

The Chairman asked what the time line was for the converting of the items from amber to green. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the training was being provided to over 700+ members of staff and therefore this is estimated to take between 12 – 18 months.

It was agreed that future updates would indicate the percentage of staff who had completed the training.

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the Member EDI Champions continued to be very engaged in the work being undertaken.

The Committee noted its satisfaction with the work being undertaken and the strategies that the Authority is putting into place to deal with EDI.

RESOLVED that:

i) the progress made against the Equality Objectives 2021-2025 for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2021-2022 be noted; and

ii) the future delivery and governance of the Service's Equality Agenda from 2023-2024 be noted.

0288 Risk Management and Strategic Risk Register – Annual Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer discussed the Risk Management and Strategic Risk Register.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted the five generic risks running across the whole organisation as well as the specific risks included on the Strategic Risk Register.

A Member required clarification on how the residual score was calculated. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that a number of factors were taken into consideration e.g., likelihood of risk, the impact it would have if it occurred and the control measures the Authority has in place to mitigate the risk. All factors are given a number which are multiplied to give a residual score.

Members complimented officers on the thoroughness of the approach and were reassured that the Authority were challenging issues and considering potential risks before they occurred.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0289 Minimising Firefighter Exposure to Carcinogens – Service Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on steps taken to minimise the exposure that firefighters have to carcinogens, including those arising from contaminated fire kit. He set out some of the steps that the Authority have already put into place to try to ensure a clean space while returning from an incident in the fire appliance.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer was thanked for producing the comprehensive report. However, a Member wanted clarification on keeping the cabs as a clear zone. It was enquired whether there was a clear cab policy nationally that the Authority could work within.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Authority is working within the guidance and advice provided by the NFCC Health & Safety Committee. The Authority are moving with technology to ensure that contaminated equipment is kept contained.

The Chairman wished to know if an external body was looking at the steps the Authority were undertaking to ensure they were being followed correctly. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that every 2 years the Service participates in a Health and Safety audit by other FRSs in the region. The Authority can select the areas that need auditing and advice is given if the other FRSs believe that additional steps are required to be taken.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Treasurer confirmed that the issue of carcinogens and the measures taken were being reflected in the current tender for insurances.

RESOLVED that current and planned measures being taken by the Service to minimise the risk of carcinogens to firefighters be noted.

0290 Update from the Health and Safety Committee

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update from the Health and Safety Committee.

Members were informed that the Health and Safety Executive would be visiting 10 Fire Authorities in the next 12 months to look at the steps being taken in response to the risks from contamination. No Fire Authority will know if they will be selected for the visit until close to the date of the visit.

Work is being undertaken within regional driving instructors in relation to slow driving, as this is where most of the property of the public is damaged.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

i) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives;

ii) Health and Safety performance information recorded during January to March (Quarter 4)

iii) Workforce Health & Wellbeing performance (Quarter 4)

The Meeting ended at: 11:18

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Appointments Committee

Tuesday, 12 September 2023, 12:00

Minutes

Members Present:

Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr R J Phillips, Mr C B Taylor, Mr T Wells

Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Vice-Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

0019 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr M Hart, Cllr E Marshall and Cllr R Udall.

0020 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

0021 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0022 Senior Officers Pay Review

The Chief Fire Officer invited Members to review the pay of the Chief Fire Officer (and consequently of all Principal Officers), review the current allowance paid for the Treasurer function and to establish salaries for separate part-time Treasurer and Monitoring Officer roles.

The Chairman commented that he had received no feedback, on receipt of the agenda, from the Members who had sent their apologies and therefore accepted that they were not against the recommendations as detailed in the report.

Members took time to debate the recommendations and concluded as follows.

RESOLVED that:

(i) The Chief Fire Officer's (CFO) salary (and that of all Principal Officers whose salaries are determined by reference to the CFO's pay) be increased by a further 4.5% backdated to 1st July 2023 (to bring the recent 'Gold Book' pay award in line with that awarded to 'Grey Book' staff);

(ii) It is agreed in principle that the CFO's salary be further reviewed to ensure the salary is appropriate in comparison to that of other Chief Fire Officers and that the Authority engage external professional support to undertake this review, ensure a proper evaluation of the position and make recommendations;

(iii) the current £3,000 pa supplement paid to the Director of Finance for undertaking the role of Treasurer be increased to an amount equivalent to 10% of the post holder's basic salary with effect from the date of this meeting;

(iv) appropriate salaries for any future standalone part-time Treasurer and Monitoring Officer roles be as follows:

Treasurer role – 1.5 days per week equivalent pro rata to the salary paid to the 'Green Book' Directors

Monitoring Officer role - 1 day per week equivalent pro rata to the salary paid to 'Green Book' Directors

The Meeting ended at: 13:04

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 12 September 2023, 10:30

Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Minutes

Members Present: Mrs J Carwardine, Mr D Chambers, Mr D Davies, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr C B Taylor, Mr T Wells

0233 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Boulter, Cllr J Monk and Cllr R Udall.

0234 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0235 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).

0236 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 3 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0237 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 1

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on the revenue and capital budget for 2023/24 and gave an update on Treasury

Management.

Members noted a significant variation to the budget detailed at the Policy and Resources Committee in May where spending slippage in the capital programme had led to a delay in spending and a consequential delay in capital financing costs of £0.250m. It was proposed to use this saving to fund the additional cost of Breathing Apparatus replacement beyond the initial estimate of £1m already provided in reserves. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the delay of the replacement was simply down to lack of technology on the market at the time.

The expected expenditure on reserve funded "Invest to Improve" projects was also noted, in particular that as more projects get underway this estimate would increase during the year.

Members noted that the green book pay award offer which was made on 23 February 2023 had still not been settled.

Members noted the changes to the capital budget since the Authority meeting in June and that the available budget to be spent at the start of 2023/24 was £4.974m.

With regard to Treasury Management, it was noted that the Authority was significantly "under borrowed" to the extent of around £10m. As the Invest to Improve programme progresses, this cash would be used up and additional long term borrowing would be required.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

i) Confirmed the revenue budget allocation adjustments;

ii) Noted the current projection of a £0.250m revenue underspending;

iii) Noted the projected expenditure on "Invest to Improve" projects;

iv) Approved the allocation of the revenue underspend to the Breathing Apparatus project; and

v) Noted the implementation of approved changes to the Capital Budget.

0238 Inclusion of Fire and Rescue Authority employees in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention informed Members of the inclusion of Fire and Rescue Authority employees in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Members agreed that this was a positive move to ensure the public's safety.

RESOLVED that the details of the amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975 be noted, in particular that:

i) all Fire and Rescue Authority employees are now eligible for Standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks;

ii) the Service will commence a process of DBS checking for all existing members of staff; and

iii) whilst there is no legal requirement to re-check on a regular basis, the Service will conduct re-checks every five years.

0239 Property update

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the current property programme.

Members were pleased to note the progress with Broadway Fire Station, that it was on target to be completed in January 2024 as per the project programme.

Members noted an alternative site had been identified in Hereford as a potential temporary location and Members would have an update as soon as information was available.

Members were also informed that in the next month there should be positive news with regard to the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility. Since the planning application had been submitted there had been concern in relation to site flood risk. Following extensive discussions an updated flood risk assessment and additional modelling had been submitted to Herefordshire Council and was currently being reviewed.

RESOLVED that the property update and progress of the capital build programme and property maintenance was noted at:

i) Broadway Fire Station

ii) Redditch Fire Station

iii) Hereford Fire Station

iv) North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility

v) Relocation of Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station

vi) Planned and reactive property maintenance

0240 Fire Cadets Annual Review 2022/2023

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention updated Members on the Fire Cadets activity for 2022/2023.

Councillor Bob Brookes, the Fire Authority Fire Cadet Champion, presented awards at the passing out ceremony in May 2023 to those who were nominated for the Highest Achiever, Most Improved and Highest Attendance Awards.

Members were pleased to note that the Mayor of Droitwich for the civic year of 2023/2024, Councillor Kate Fellows, had chosen HWFRS Fire Cadets as one of her Charities.

RESOLVED that the Fire Cadets update for 2022/2023 is noted, in particular:

i) the introduction of the Droitwich Fire Cadets branch in September 2022;

ii) the formulation of the Fire Cadet Executive Committee to provide governance and support; and

iii) that 18 Cadets successfully passed out at a ceremony in May 2023.

0241 2023-24 Performance Report: Q1 (01 April – 30 June 2023)

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented a summary of the Service's performance for Q1, 2023-2024 which included the first quarter of the new attendance reporting measure.

Members' attention was drawn to the incorrect colour coding on the graphs in the Appendix and assured Members that this would be resolved for the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the details of the Q1 2023-24 performance headlines be noted, in particular that:

i) a total of 1,966 incidents overall were attended in Q1 2023-2024 which was an increase of 6% on Q1 2022-2023;

ii) however, Fires (445) were 10% lower than Q1 2022/23 and lower than the five year average of 514;

iii) Special services (558) although higher than the corresponding

quarter of the previous year were still in line with the five year average; and

iv) False alarms (993) had also increased by 14%, which was due mainly to an increase in the number of false alarms with good intent.

The Meeting ended at: 11:50

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman