

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

12. Chief Fire Officer's Service Report

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Authority of recent key developments and activities.
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Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Service Exercise

2. At the request of Members and following on from my last report, highlighted below are the key outcomes from the large scale Service Exercise that took place on 15 and 19 October at Kidderminster and Shrub Hill Rail stations respectively. Whilst attendees from all agencies draw an enormous professional benefit by attending these exercises, the Service is always keen to capture any significant learning outcomes that may influence the way we operate in the future.
3. The exercises were supported by our partners from the Police and Ambulance Services, Network Rail and in excess of 200 volunteer casualties. Responders were presented with complex challenges including, fire fighting within a tunnel, multiple extrications, unsafe rail structures and large numbers of casualties with injuries ranging from amputation of limbs and major trauma, to large groups of distressed 'walking wounded'.
4. Over 100 firefighters took part in the exercise, crewing 20 appliances and various specialist vehicles including a Command Support Unit, Incident Support Vehicle and Urban Search and Rescue modules.
5. Hugely positive debriefing sessions involving all the agencies involved identified many areas of good practice with the following areas being highlighted for future consideration:
 - Closer integration with the Ambulance Service's specialist Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) would benefit casualties with quicker access to advanced medical care. Whilst this worked well it was noted that this is an area that could be utilised more effectively.
 - The need for effective casualty clearing processes to avoid congestion and enable better prioritisation.
 - A better understanding of the support requirement for post rail incident investigation was needed.
 - More opportunities for all agencies to practice multi-agency command briefings, in line with JESIP training.

- The resources required for the logistical support of large scale Breathing Apparatus operations could benefit from a review.
6. Feedback from all attendees has been very positive particularly around the realism brought about by the use of large numbers of volunteer casualties. This along with the points above will be used to formulate the on-going training provision and will be built into next years' Service exercise and those carried out locally throughout the year.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

7. JESIP is a two year government led programme nearing its conclusion, which aims to improve ways in which police, fire and ambulance Services work together at major incidents.
8. JESIP training has been undertaken by 105 ambulance, police and fire services in the UK and at the end of the initial two year programme has jointly trained over 10,000 Commanders and Control Room Managers, and in excess of 24,000 people have accessed the e-learning products; to deliver all this in less than 10 months is an outstanding achievement. To date, 84 HWFRS staff in command roles have received bespoke training with other emergency service Commanders, and a further 400 staff have undergone internet based JESIP training.
9. As a result of the JESIP programme over 500 HWFRS staff have received training in improved radio messaging procedures to ensure the right information is supplied, in the correct format, at the earliest stages of an incident.
10. HWFRS is a key partner of the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum and has also been involved in local tri Service training and exercising with other non-emergency Service Cat 1 and 2 responders. The most recent example of this was an exercise held in December 2014 testing off-site emergency plans for a top tier, a high risk COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) site located within Worcestershire; this complemented a number of Service level exercises which have also had a significant multi-agency dimension.
11. A full evaluation of the programme has confirmed that, whilst there is more to be done, JESIP has been successful in advancing joint working skills and competencies. It has also found that JESIP training has made a real difference in increasing levels of confidence in the way HWFRS Commanders work with their colleagues from other services. There is much evidence of JESIP being used across the country to improve response to incidents of all types; one such example of this last year, where two missing canoeists' lives were saved on the River Wye through effective joint agency working and the use of appropriate resources.
12. This excellent progress has been recognised by Ministers, Government Departments and the emergency service strategic leads for JESIP. There will be on-going support, and national monitoring, to ensure the programme continues to be embedded locally.

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