

12. Chief Fire Officer's Service Report

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Authority of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 2011/2012.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Performance

Operational Activity – Total and Fire Incidents

Total Incidents Attended

2. Overall incident numbers have reduced within the year, despite a considerable increase in secondary fire numbers. Reductions were seen in Special Service and False Alarm incident types. In 2012-13 the Service predicts a reduction in False Alarm incidents due to the introduction of the IRMP Recommendation 3 revised AFA Policy.

Total Incidents	2010-11	2011-12	Percentage change
All Fires	2510	2849	13.5%
Special Services	1780	1509	-15.2%
False Alarms	3846	3499	-9.0%
	8136	7857	- 3.4%

(Table 1-Total Incidents 2010-11 and 2011-12)

3. There has been a 14% reduction in all incidents since 2007-08, but the Service attended more fires in 2011-12 than in 2010-11. The reason for this is a year on year increase in secondary fires.
4. The Service attended the lowest number of Special Service incidents in the last five years due a reduction in flooding incidents when compared with 2010-11 and also the lowest number of False Alarm incidents attended in the last five years.

Total Number of Fires

5. Total numbers of fires rose this year due to a significant increase in secondary fire numbers assisted by dry weather conditions. Significant reductions were seen in chimney fires. Extensive prevention and education campaigns have been directed in this area.

Total Fires	2010-11	2011-12	Percentage change
Primary Fires	1188	1237	4.1%
Secondary Fires	1066	1424	33.6%
Chimney Fires	256	188	-26.6%
	2510	2849	13.5%

(Table 2 –Total Fires 2010-11 and 2011-12)

6. Primary fires have increased by 2.0% from last three years' annual average and the Service has attended the highest number of Secondary fires since 2006-07 and the lowest number of Chimney fires since 2006-07.

Primary Fires

7. The total number of Primary fires has increased marginally this year. In context the overall increase in numbers is not considered significant, with outdoor fires a major factor in the increase in total fire numbers. The rise in outdoor fires is associated with the dry weather conditions seen this year.

Primary Fires	2010-11	2011-12	Percentage change
Building Fires	746	793	6.3%
Vehicle & Transport Fires	368	331	-10.1%
Outdoor Fires	74	113	52.7%
	1188	1237	4.1%

(Table 3 –Primary Fires 2010-11 and 2011-12)

8. The largest increase within the outdoor fires category was in grassland, woodland and crops fires. There were 40 grassland, woodland and crops fires that were classed as primary in 2011-12 compared with 23 in 2010-11.

Secondary Fires

9. The Service has made considerable efforts to minimise secondary fires occurring but the dry weather conditions seen this year has made fire setting and fire spread more prevalent. The Service is not unique in this regard, with many Services across the country seeing an increase in secondary fires.

Secondary Fires	2010-11	2011-12	Percentage change
Grassland Woodland Crops	441	740	67.8%
Outdoor Structures	272	257	-5.5%
Outdoor (inc land)	307	372	21.2%
Other	46	55	19.6%
	1066	1424	33.6%

(Table 4 –Secondary Fires 2010-11 and 2011-12)

10. The majority of secondary fires originated in grassland, woodland and crops and other outdoor locations. 282 out of the 740 grassland, woodland and crop fires were in what is defined as 'tree scrub'. 133 out of the 740 grassland, woodland and crop fires were originated in domestic garden vegetation.

Special Service Incidents

11. Overall Special Service call numbers have seen a significant reduction this year. This is mainly due to significant reductions in flooding events assisted by a mild winter. Other Special Services such as lift rescues have also seen a reduction. The Service is monitoring this area of activity to determine whether the introduction of the Service's cost recovery policy will influence current levels. RTC numbers are consistent with the previous year but remain an area for considerable prevention activity and partnership working.

All Special Services	2010-11	2011-12	Percentage change
RTC Incidents	656	659	0.5%
Flooding	234	62	-73.5%
Other Services	890	788	-11.5%
	1780	1509	-15.2%

(Table 5 –Special Services 2010-11 and 2011-12)

12. There has been a reduction in the number of flooding incidents attended due to milder weather conditions experienced in 2011-12 due to milder weather conditions resulting in less burst pipes than in 2010-12.
13. The Service attended incidents with 119 serious injuries caused as a result of RTCs in 2011-12 compared with incidents with 113 serious injuries in 2010-11. There were 12 Fatalities from RTC in 2011-12 compared with 12 also in 2010-11.

False Alarm Incidents

14. The Service has seen a reduction in all False Alarm categories this year recording the lowest activity levels for 5 years. The Service is introducing a revised AFA Policy throughout 2012-13 and will assess the impact that this will have on activity levels.

Total False Alarms	2010-11	2011-12	Percentage change
Malicious False Alarms	76	63	-17.1%
False Alarm Good Intent	878	797	-9.2%
Automatic False Alarms	2892	2639	-8.7%
	3846	3499	-9.0%

(Table 6 –False Alarms 2010-11 and 2011-12)

15. A full performance analysis of Quarter 4 and End of Year performance has previously been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee. The Policy and Resources Committee will continue to receive reports with detailed information on the measures the Service is taking to achieve its targets and where improvements are required.

Health and Safety

Incidents and Injuries

16. A total of 57¹ Health and Safety related incidents were reported this quarter, of which 5 were or had the potential to be 'serious incidents'. There were also 3 reported incidents of verbal abuse/obstruction to crews.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	This Quarter Total	Previous Quarter Total
Serious Incidents ²	2	2	1	5	10
Near Hit/Cause for Concern ³	6	0	3	9	10
Specialist Investigations ⁴	2	3	1	6	5

Analysis

17. The serious or potentially serious incidents this quarter comprised of the following:

- Whilst responding, third party pulled out in front of appliance, resulting in collision – specialist investigation completed and debriefed;
- Whilst responding, rescue equipment ejected from appliance locker – specialist investigation completed;
- Reversing appliance on station, struck trunking containing electric cables – specialist investigation completed and debriefed;
- Training trailer damaged during a failed ascent on a wet grassy incline – specialist investigation ongoing; and
- During vehicle maintenance, jack slipped causing vehicle to drop – specialist investigation completed and debriefed.

18. In addition, a Specialist Investigation was mobilised:

- During ALP training, back injury to a firefighter whilst positioning base-plate for outrigger – investigation completed.

Fleet Incidents

Station	Total	Response
21 Worcester	4	1
24 Kidderminster	1	1
25 Bromsgrove	1	1
27 Redditch	1	0
28 Evesham	2	1
42 Ledbury	1	0
46 Hereford	1	0

Station	Total	Response
50 Leintwardine	1	0
55 Peterchurch	1	0
Headquarters	1	0
South District	1	1
Training Centre	1	0
Total	16	5

¹ Serious injuries, minor injuries, vehicle collisions, potential hazards, near hits.

² Incidents either actually resulting in, or having the potential to result in a fatality, serious personal injury or significant loss or damage.

³ Incidents that almost resulted in an injury or conditions identified that have the potential to cause injury, loss or a near hit but have not done so up to the time of reporting – e.g. items falling but not injuring anyone.

⁴ Of incidents either actually resulting in, or having the potential to result in serious injuries or losses.

19. Of the total of 16 driving-related incidents reported:

- 13 were due to H&WFRS driver error;
- 5 occurred whilst responding to incidents;
- 4 occurred during slow speed manoeuvres; and
- 5 occurred during reversing manoeuvres.

Items of Interest

High Sheriff's visit to West District, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

20. Herefordshire's High Sheriff, Mr Simon Arbuthnott, visited stations within West District on Wednesday 29 February 2012. The High Sheriff plays an increasingly active and supportive role within Herefordshire both in relation to the emergency services and in lending encouragement to public sector agencies.
21. Mr Arbuthnott was escorted around West District by the CFO and West District Commander Rob Ball. The visit began with tours of Kingsland and Leominster Fire Stations; Kingsland Station is the proposed site for one of the Service's new Strategic Training Facilities. Mr Arbuthnott met firefighters at both stations who explained how valuable these facilities will be in delivering training to personnel on a purpose built site. They were also able to explain to Mr Arbuthnott how their roles provide cost effective, high quality fire fighting and rescue services within their local communities and across the Service area. Mr Arbuthnott acknowledged the importance of their role and that of their primary employers who support this crucial work.
22. Mr Arbuthnott's tour continued with a visit to Hereford Fire Station where he was introduced to members of Green Watch. The watch demonstrated the variety of vehicles and their capabilities explaining how they deliver emergency and preventative services within the community. During the visit the station received an emergency call and Mr Arbuthnott commented on the speed and efficiency of the response.
23. Mr Arbuthnott concluded his visit by thanking all involved for a fantastic insight and experience. He followed this in writing to individuals; *"You perform an absolutely vital role in society and the community, and I wanted you to be aware of our gratitude"*.

Exercise Olympus - Fire Service College 17-18 March

24. As part of the Service's operational training programme, a significant exercise was held at the Fire Service College over the weekend 17-18 March 2012. Exercise Olympus was the most extensive exercise conducted by the Service for a number of years and involved over 20 fire appliances, specialist vehicles and National Resilience assets. Overall over 200 personnel participated in the exercise.
25. The principal aim of the exercise was to integrate firefighters with Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and partner agencies and to work together as they would in the event of a major search and rescue incident. It has been noted nationally as a key resilience training event in the lead up to the Olympic Games.

26. The exercise simulated an explosion at a university campus, involving a building collapse with a large number of casualties and many people unaccounted for. To be as realistic as possible, resources were mobilised in sequence and timings intended to represent the likely development of the incident; local fire crews were first to arrive at the scene, followed by ambulance crews, further fire crews and appliances (including the Aerial Ladder Platform and Incident and Command Support Units) and also USAR. The exercise ran continuously over a 36-hour period. Our own USAR team was supported by two further teams from South Wales and Merseyside. Shropshire and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Services also participated, along with our own fleet technicians to look after the many vehicles involved in the exercise.
27. Whilst we regularly hold training exercises within the Service, this is the first time fire crews and USAR teams have been involved on such a major scale, as well as working through periods of darkness. For added realism live casualties comprising of Community Safety Volunteers, Young Firefighters from Redditch and Droitwich, professionals from Amputees in Action, as well as art and design students from Worcester College of Technology, were all made-up to simulate a range of different and very realistic injuries.
28. The exercise proved to be an invaluable training event and through multi-agency and Service debriefs has identified a number of key outcomes that can assist us to improve our operational response. Additionally the opportunity to test the Service's resilience to undertake such a significant exercise whilst maintaining full fire cover across the Service area was extremely useful.

Defibrillators

29. In February this year the Service's Senior Management Board made the decision to extend the provision of defibrillators throughout the Service. An additional 26 units have now been procured giving a total of 38 across the Service. The process of fitting one at every Service location, and training staff in its use is underway, and this is due to be completed by the end of June.
30. At fire stations the defibrillator will be located on an appliance and will form part of the trauma provision, for use within the communities, as well as for our own staff. At locations that are staffed, such as Service HQ or Training Centre, the presence of the defibrillator will be advertised on the appropriate national websites, that enable members of the public to identify the location of their nearest unit in the event of an emergency. The Service will not be directly responding to any calls to provide medical care, but will have the equipment available for use whenever necessary or called upon.

YFA Passing Out Parade

31. A group of 17 teenagers celebrated the completion of a 13-week training course at their annual Young Firefighters passing out ceremony at Droitwich Fire Station on 19 May 2012.
32. The group, which included eight from the Droitwich branch of the Young Firefighters Association (YFA) and nine from the Redditch branch, have all recently completed the YFA training programme.

33. At the passing out ceremony they were presented with a certificate of achievement by Deputy Chief Fire Officer Richard Lawrence and they also demonstrated to their families, Fire Service personnel and local dignitaries some of the skills they have learnt during their training. This included a hose running drill, a ladder climb, a simulated car fire and a house rescue demonstration.
34. Congratulations to all of those Young Firefighters who worked hard to pass their training course. Thanks and congratulations must also go to the instructors who give their own time to support the young people throughout the year.

Fire Control Project Update

35. The Fire Control project continues to make good progress and preparations are now being made to move the Fire Control function into Service Headquarters during July 2012.
36. During this May and June, new turnout systems that mobilise operational personnel are being installed at all stations. New high performing and resilient Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) have also been installed on every fire appliance. The MDT will provide access to vital incident data en-route to and during an incident. This new technology also provides a search facility for any address in the two counties, which is vital for operational crews operating outside their normal area. In addition, operational crews will be able to access data about water hydrant locations, floor plans and access routes to a building that is on fire.
37. Phase 2 of this project will address how we work with our neighbours at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service to deliver a collaborative approach to the delivery of Control Room functions. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed and a Project Board has established. This Board will meet on a monthly basis to consider progress made. The next key milestone will be the approval of the Programme Brief in September 2012.
38. In addition to the above, Officers from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are also exploring options for improved resilience beyond the West Mercia collaborative arrangement.

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