

6. 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 1 July 2011 to 30 September 2011.

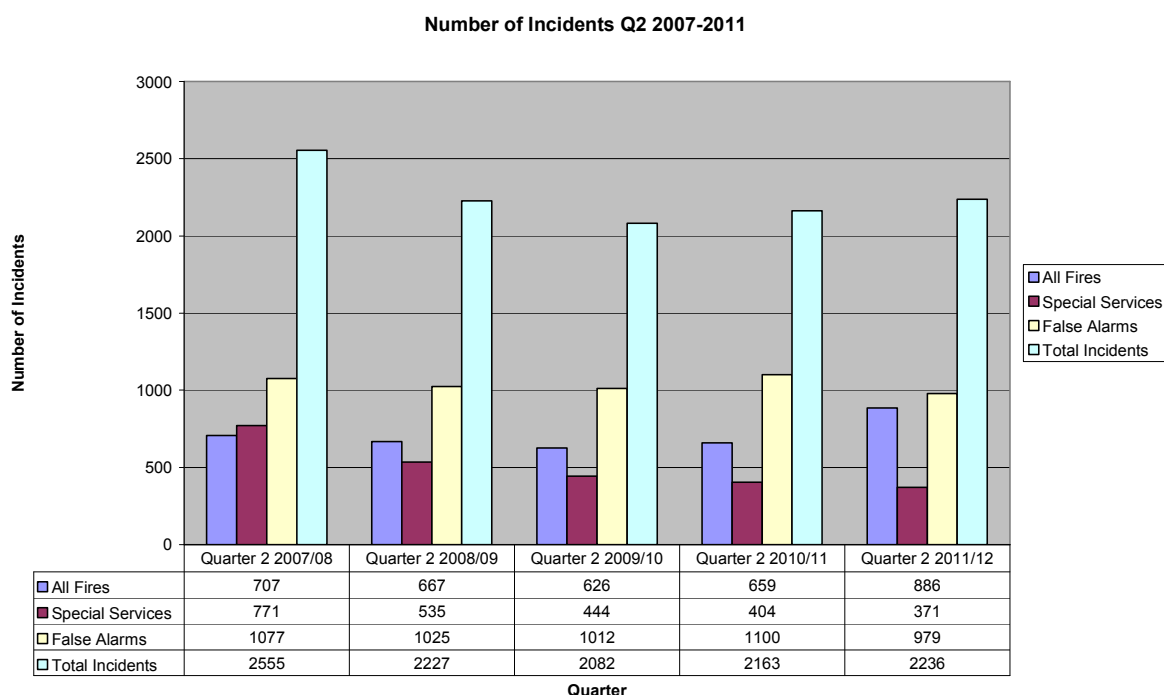
Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Performance

Operational Activity

2. Figure 1 below demonstrates overall operational activity during Quarter 2 2011-2012 compared with the second quarter in the previous 4 years:



(Figure 1 – Comparative number of incidents Q2 2007/08-2011/12)

3. Total incident numbers for Quarter 2 2011-2012 show a slight increase on the same quarter last year. 2236 incidents were attended in Quarter 2 2011-2012 compared with 2163 incidents in Quarter 2 2010-2011, (+3.4%). This is due to an increase in the total number of fires attended. The number of special services incidents attended and the number of false alarms attended have both decreased compared with the same quarter last year.

Total Number of Fires Attended

4. The total number of fires has increased from 659 in Quarter 2 2010-2011 to 886 in Quarter 2 2011-2012, (+34.4%). Table 1 below demonstrates that the increase in total fires is mainly due to a 62.9% increase in secondary fires in Quarter 2 2011-2012 compared with Quarter 2 2010-2011:

	Quarter 2 2010-11	Quarter 2 2011-12	Percentage change
Primary Fires	324	360	+11.1%
Secondary Fires	318	518	+62.9%
Chimney Fires	17	8	-52.9%
Total Fires	659	886	+34.4%

(Table 1 – Total Fires Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

Primary Fires

5. Primary fires have increased from 324 in Quarter 2 2010-11 to 360 in Quarter 2 2011-12 (+11.1%):

	Quarter 2 2010-11	Quarter 2 2011-12	Percentage change
Building Fires	195	208	+6.7%
Road Vehicle Fires	97	103	+6.1%
Outdoor Fires	32	49	+53.1%
Total Fires	324	360	+11.1%

(Table 2 – Primary Fires Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

Secondary Fires

6. The Service attended 518 secondary fires in Quarter 2 2011-12 compared with 318 in the same quarter last year (+62.9%).
7. The table below illustrates that there have been increases in the number of secondary fires attended in every month when compared with the same quarter last year. The summer increase in secondary fires has lasted longer into September than in the previous year. Accidental secondary fires represented 55.6% of all secondary fires in the month of September 2011.

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Quarterly Total
Secondary Fires Q2 10-11	147	115	56	318
Secondary Fires Q2 11-12	179	206	133	518
Percentage Change	+21.8%	+79.1%	+137.5%	+62.9%

(Table 3 – Secondary Fires per month Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

8. Further analysis indicates that there has been an increase in secondary fires starting in tree scrub, railway trackside vegetation and roadside vegetation in Quarter 2 2011-12 compared with the same quarter last year:

	Quarter 2 2010-11	Quarter 2 2011-12
Tree Scrub Fires	45	123
Railway Trackside Vegetation Fires	15	48
Roadside Vegetation Fires	5	28

(Table 4 – Selected Secondary Fire categories Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

9. As reported in Quarter 1 a number of railway trackside fires were related to the Severn Valley Railway who have confirmed that they have been running more frequent services than in the past. As a result of discussions with our Community Safety department, the Railway has agreed to a number of interventions to reduce the number of fires occurring and have also agreed to set up regular meetings with the Service in the future. Although there have been 48 railway trackside vegetation fires in Quarter 2 2011-12, only 9 were in September.
10. In addition, the Service has also embarked upon a range of initiatives in Quarter 2 designed to reduce the number of secondary fires, including high visibility joint arson patrols with the Police in the Winyates area of Redditch, joint working with the owners of Wychbury Hall, Hagley where a sharp rise in secondary fires has occurred, a continuation of Junior Fire setter Referrals to help reduce the number of deliberate secondary fires and continued close working with Police on all arson cases to highlight trends and identify opportunities for joint remedial action.

Special Service Incidents

11. The number of Special Service incidents has decreased in Quarter 2 2011-12 compared with the same quarter last year with 371 incidents attended in Quarter 2 2011-2012 compared with 404 in Quarter 2 2010-2011, (-8.2%):

	Quarter 2 2010-11	Quarter 2 2011-12	Percentage change
RTC Incidents	165	146	-11.5%
Flooding	13	13	0.0%
Other Special Services	226	212	-6.2%
All Special Services	404	371	-8.2%

(Table 5 – Special Services Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

False Alarm Incidents

12. The number of false alarm incidents has also decreased in Quarter 2 2011-2012 with 979 incidents attended in Quarter 2 2010-2011 compared with 1100 in Quarter 2 2010-2011 (-11.0%):

	Quarter 2 2010-11	Quarter 2 2011-12	Percentage change
Malicious False Alarms	22	17	-22.7%
False Alarm Good Intent	240	229	-4.6%
Automatic False Alarms	838	733	-12.5%
Total False Alarms	1100	979	-11.0%

(Table 6 – False Alarms Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

Health and Safety

Incidents and Injuries

	July	Aug	Sep	This Quarter Total	Previous Quarter Total
Serious Incidents ¹	3	5	3	11	8
Near Hit/Cause for Concern ²	5	6	3	16	17
Potential Exposure ³	8	2	0	10	9
Specialist Investigations ⁴	0	0	3	3	4

Analysis

13. There were 11 incidents reported this quarter that were serious, or had the potential to be serious. This represents 12% of all incidents reported during this 3 month period, but represents a 2% increase on the figures for the previous quarter. After preliminary investigations this led to only 3 of these incidents requiring a specialist investigation.
14. Furthermore, there has been a 4% drop in the number of reported near hits and causes for concern, which during this period represent just over 18%, as compared to 22% in the last quarter.
15. The Specialist investigations mobilised this quarter comprise of the following:
 - One incident resulted in a member of staff losing consciousness during use of the cross trainer in the headquarters gym;
 - Reddening of both arms following the wearing of Breathing Apparatus at a house fire;
 - A firefighter from another Fire Service being bitten by a dog they were trying to restrain at a house fire involving our personnel – the investigation is being conducted in partnership with the other Fire Service.
16. All three of these Specialist Investigations are still under the final stages of investigation.
17. This quarter, 9 of the 10 incidents of potential exposure occurred during operational training and would be deemed “normal”. In addition, there was one incident of verbal abuse to crews that was also a significant event due to the nature of the verbal abuse and the fact that the crew were impeded in firefighting.

¹ Incidents either actually resulting in, or having the potential to result in a fatality, serious personal injury or significant loss or damage.

² 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 from shelf near to people or unbalanced and overhanging items stored on a shelf.

³ Incidents where persons were potentially exposed to hazardous substances (usually during operational duties) – e.g. exposure to river water during swift water rescue training, exposure to asbestos during firefighting.

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

Fleet Incidents

18. Of the total of 21 driving-related incidents reported this period, 14 occurred during routine driving, 2 during driver training and 5 occurred whilst responding to incidents.

Station	Total	Response Driving
21 Worcester	5	1
22 Stourport-on-Severn	1	1
23 Bewdley	1	0
31 Pershore	1	0
41 Malvern	1	0
43 Fownhope	1	1
46 Hereford	3	1

Station	Total	Response Driving
48 Eardisley	1	1
52 Leominster	1	0
HQ	2	0
Training Centre	3	0
Ops Logistics	1	0
Total	21	5

Training Completed 2011-12

- 36 personnel trained in undertaking risk assessment;
- 30 personnel trained in managing hazardous substances;
- 9 Fleet Technicians trained in using/managing abrasive wheels;
- 9 Fleet Technicians trained in noise and vibration management;
- All Fire Control staff trained in managing Display Screen Equipment;
- 26 departmental and station staff trained in managing Display Screen Equipment; and
- 30 staff trained in Conflict Resolution.

Significant Completed Activities

- Manager's Health and Safety Handbook has now been shared with the region who intend to use it as a model for their own versions;
- Work has begun on a review of the GAP analysis conducted by all Fire Services within the region against the HSE's consolidated report following its inspections of 8 Fire Services, to draw out key themes from which to develop leading indicators;
- Reviews of 15 Service Policies and Instructions have been completed, with another currently being considered with key stakeholders;
- Two new policies have been written relating to asbestos management and pressure systems and gas containers;
- Delivery of 2 support sessions to Fleet; and
- All Premises' Action Plans have now been written, with the exception of Headquarters as we still await the completed Workplace Inspection.

Future Performance Management

19. The Service is currently reviewing all performance measures to ensure they remain relevant and contribute to the Service's aims. This process of review will also examine targets and the potential for targets to be replaced with more meaningful 'bands of tolerance.' Any proposed changes will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

Items of Interest

7½ Years Sentence for Arson

20. At 03:35 hours on Friday 14 January 2011, Fire Control received a call to a house fire in Evesham Road, Cookhill. The incident was identified as persons reported and 3 fire appliances from Redditch Fire Station were mobilised, with the first arriving at 03:50 hours.
21. On arrival the fire crews were faced with a severe fire in a 2 bedroom detached cottage. The Incident Commander mobilised an additional pump and requested the attendance of a water carrier. As the incident was persons reported considerable effort was used to search the dwelling with BA crews. At one stage the bedroom above the room of origin of the fire collapsed into the ground floor slightly injuring a firefighter. This firefighter was treated at the scene by paramedics and remained on duty. Eventually no persons were found to be in the dwelling.
22. A Fire Investigation Officer was also mobilised and arrived on scene at 04:23 hours. Initial observations of the scene identified vital evidence in the way of bottles containing an ignitable liquid which were preserved for later seizure by Police Forensic Investigators.
23. A second Fire Investigator took on the job of a full scene examination in daylight hours and worked alongside a Police Forensic Investigator and the West Midlands Fire Service Hydrocarbon Detector Dog Team. The dogs made several indications to the presence of ignitable liquids within the cottage.
24. A Police investigation led to the arrest and charging of an individual on several counts of arson.
25. After a 3 day trial at Worcester Crown Court in September, where one of the Service's Fire Investigation Officers gave expert evidence, the individual was found guilty of arson recklessly endangering the life of the occupier and arson recklessly endangering the life of rescuers (emergency service) and others. The individual was given a custodial sentence of 7½ years.

Worcestershire Awards Ceremony

26. Firefighters and staff from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (H&WFRS) were honoured at an Awards Ceremony held on Friday 23 September at the Guild Hall in Worcester.
27. During the evening, medals for Long Service and Good Conduct were presented by Michael Brinton, Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, as the Queen's representative, and also by Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates and Councillor Derek W Prodger MBE, Chairman of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority. The High Sheriff of Worcestershire, Lady Rosalind Morrison, also attended the ceremony to present the High Sheriff's Award while George Sherry, Area Commander with H&WFRS, acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Herefordshire Awards Ceremony

28. Firefighters and staff from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (H&WFRS) were honoured at an Awards Ceremony held on Friday 4 November at Hereford Town Hall.
29. During the evening, medals for Long Service and Good Conduct were presented by Lieutenant General Sir John Foley KCB, OBE, MC, DL, Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire, and also by Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates and Councillor Derek W Prodger MBE, Chairman of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority. Station Commander Neil Pigott acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Leadership Seminar

30. The Chief Fire Officer hosted the inaugural Leadership Seminar in November to which all Service Managers were invited. The Seminar is part of a leadership development programme that has been designed to improve leadership capacity and competence at all levels of the organisation. The attendees heard presentations from various speakers which were designed to promote debate in the subject of leadership and how effective leadership contributes to a high quality organisation.

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