

## 9. Service Report

### Purpose of Report

- To inform Members of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 January to 31 March 2010.

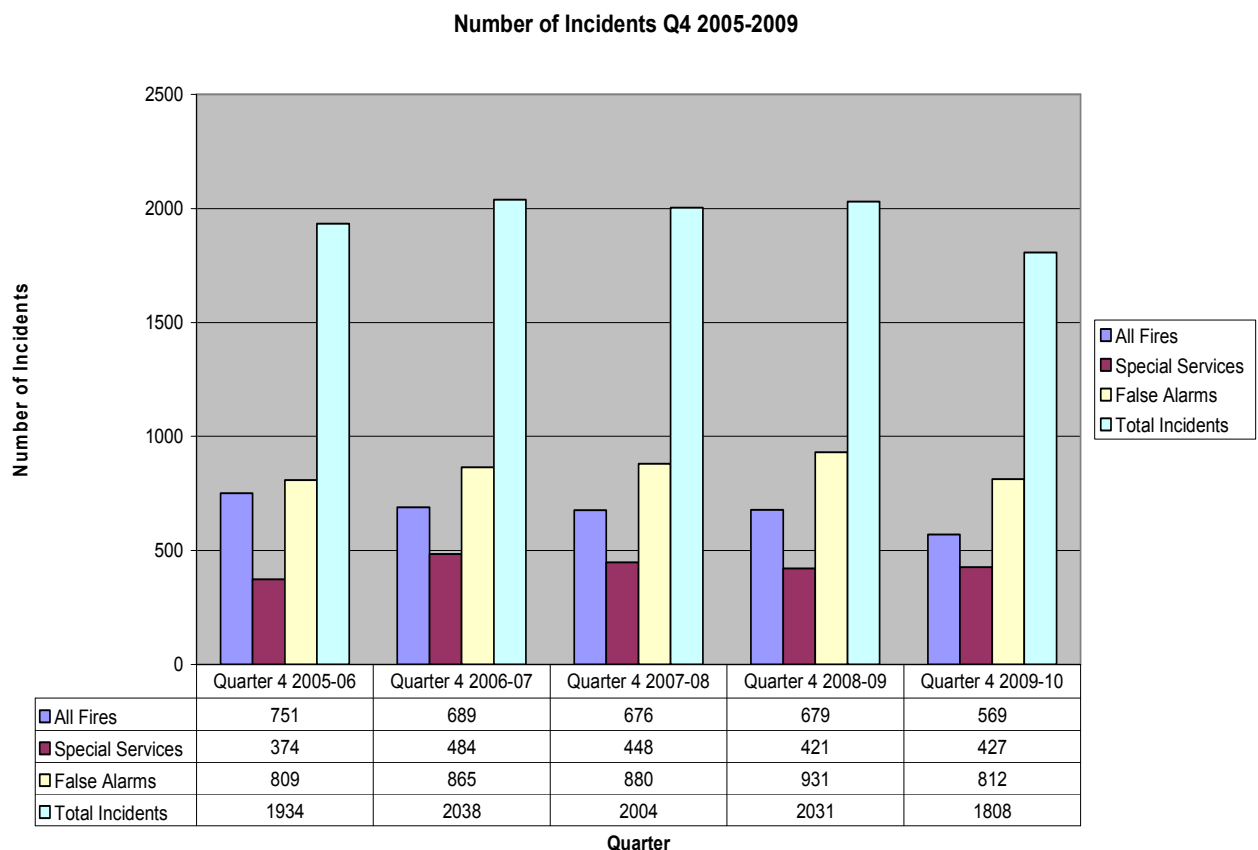
### Recommendation

*The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.*

## Performance

### Operational Performance Update Quarter 4 2009-10

- Figure 1 below demonstrates overall operational activity during Quarter 4 2009-10 compared with the same quarter in the previous 4 years:



(Figure 1 – Comparative number of incidents Q4 2005-2009)

- Total incident numbers for Quarter 4 2009-10 shows our best quarterly performance over the same period in the last five years. This is due to decreases in the number of fires and false alarms attended. The total number of incidents has decreased from 2031 in Quarter 4 2008-09 to 1808 in Quarter 4 2009-10, a decrease of 10.98%.

4. The number of fires has reduced from 679 in Quarter 4 2008-09 to 569 in Quarter 4 2009-10, a decrease of 16.2%. Primary Fires reduced from 326 incidents attended in Quarter 4 2008-09 to 288 in Quarter 4 2009-10, a reduction of 11.66%. The number of secondary fires has similarly reduced from 236 in Quarter 4 2008-09 to 152 in Quarter 4 2009-10, a reduction of 35.59%. The number of chimney fires has increased when compared with the same quarter last year with 129 chimney fire incidents in Quarter 4 2009-10 compared with 117 chimney fire incidents in Quarter 4 2008-09, an increase of 10.26%. The number of chimney fires attended is largely dependent on prevailing weather conditions. There were 47 chimney incidents in January 2010, 31 in February 2010 and 51 in March 2010 in a quarter which was reported to be colder than usual.
5. The number of False Alarm incidents has decreased from 931 in Quarter 4 2008-09 to 812 in Quarter 4 2009-10, a decrease of 12.78%. There were 621 Automatic False Alarms (AFAs) in Quarter 4 2009-10 compared with 655 in the same quarter last year, a decrease of 5.19%. The Service attended 11 malicious false alarms in Quarter 4 2009-10 compared with 38 in Quarter 4 2008-09, a decrease of 71.05% and 180 False alarm good intent incidents in Quarter 4 2009-10 compared with 238 in Quarter 4 2008-09, a decrease of 24.37%. The success with these incident types can be attributed to more robust call challenging and the continued application of Service policies and initiatives.

## Health and Safety

### Incidents and Injuries

	<b>Total Incidents*</b>	<b>RIDDOR Reportable</b>
January – March 2009	51	3
April – June 2009	54	11
July – Sept 2009	46	4
October – December 2009	72	6
<b>January – March 2010</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>11</b>

\*includes all H & S Incidents (injuries, fleet H & S incidents, near hits, etc)

### Analysis

6. The number of reported Health and Safety incidents/injuries this quarter has increased significantly when compared with the previous quarter – up from 72 to 103 – and the same period last year – up from 51.
7. The number of incidents reportable under RIDDOR has increased when compared with the previous quarter – up from 6 to 11. However, this is a significant increase compared to the same period last year – from 3 up to 11.
8. Members will be aware that whilst the numbers have increased this quarter, the numbers remain small when compared to other comparable organisations; however safety remains a high priority and we will do what is required to reduce incidents where possible.

9. The 11 RIDDOR reportable Health and Safety incidents comprise of:
  - One slip on icy ground when responding to an alert.
  - Two incidents of uncontrolled release of air from BA cylinders resulting in injuries to hands.
  - One injury resulting from attempting to operate the valve on a new BA Set.
  - One in the potential exposure to carbon monoxide during a rescue.
  - One incident relates to a fire caused by a faulty shower on a Station.
  - One is a BA malfunction of the distress signal unit.
  - Two were reportable manual handling injury.
  - One tragic incident involving a fatality.
  - One was a twisted ankle sustained when responding to their alert.
10. Four of the incidents reported under RIDDOR are being dealt with as specialist investigations. These relate predominantly to incidents involving the new BA kit.
11. Again, as identified in previous periods, a significant number of all Health and Safety incidents continue to involve Operational personnel.
12. Yet again this quarter, slip, trip and fall injuries and manual handling injuries have continued to remain low, with the largest proportion of incidents being attributed to Breathing Apparatus and exposures to hazardous substances (such as during swift water rescue training).
13. A total of 9 Fleet Health and Safety Incidents were reported this quarter, with 5 of these incidents occurring during routine driving activities. The total number of reported fleet incidents has remained the same when compared with the immediately preceding quarter.
14. The number of reported Near Hits and Potential Hazards has increased; however we are mindful these relate to the BA kit.
15. Further investigation into the steep rise in incidents/injuries and injuries reportable under RIDDOR suggests the increase is attributed to the introduction of new Breathing Apparatus kit.
16. The main issues relating to the Draeger BA set fall into two categories: ergonomic design and the unexpected rapid release of air. The safety of firefighters is the number one priority of the Service and therefore the introduction of this piece of equipment was halted whilst investigations took place.

17. Following extensive investigations, a cost effective solution to prevent the potential for rapid release of air has been identified and is being implemented across all four Services in the West Midlands region. The additional cost of approximately £60,000 will be met by a priority allocation from the Minor Capital Schemes budget. In addition, a reconfiguration of the cylinder valve has removed the ergonomic issues of the set. The rollout of the equipment will recommence during the summer months.

### **Health and Safety Training**

18. COSHH, Risk assessment and IOSH courses are planned for 2010/11 to ensure staff are given the skills and knowledge they require and forms part of the Service's direction to promote the training and safety of all our personnel. This in turn strives to reduce incidents of injury and loss.
19. Members received Health and Safety training recently, demonstrating areas of responsibility and some useful examples of specialist investigation. Excellent feedback was received from Members and it is planned to roll out similar training in the future.

### **Complaints, Concerns, Compliments and Donations**

20.

	<b>Jan-10</b>	<b>Feb-10</b>	<b>Mar-10</b>
Complaints/Concerns	0	4	4
Compliments	6	4	5
Donations	3	2	1

### **Information Management**

21. **Requests for Information  
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Data Protection Act (DPA)/Environmental  
Information Regulations (EIR)**

<b>Q4</b>	<b>FOIA Requests received and completed</b>	<b>DPA Requests received and completed</b>	<b>EIR Requests received and completed</b>	<b>Requests received to date</b>
January 2010	15	1	0	16
February 2010	14	1	0	15
March 2010	23	2	0	25
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Requests received January – March 2010</b>			<b>56</b>	

## Items of Interest

### EU Watersave

22. The EU Watersave project is a programme of work relating to water rescue which is funded by the European Union. H&WFRS was an Associated Beneficiary and had indicatively signed up to carry out part of the work on behalf of the Co-ordinating Beneficiary in the Netherlands.
23. At the FRA meeting on 17 February 2010, it was resolved that:
  - the funding offer be accepted, subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer, the Treasurer and the Clerk;
  - the grant agreement be reviewed by the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Clerk to ensure that the arrangements put in place for delivery of the UK contribution, and the control measures to oversee delivery and protect the Authority's interests, are robust; and
  - these control measures include systems to update the Authority on the project's progress and outcomes.
24. Upon taking up post, the new CFO then consulted with Service colleagues, the Clerk and the Treasurer and concluded that it was not in the Service's best interest to continue with this project. Merseyside FRS was approached (as a Service with similar experience and expertise to H&WFRS) and their Authority officially accepted the project at a meeting on 27 April 2010. The handover of the project was seamless and it is envisaged that H&WFRS crews may still benefit by taking part in some of the exercises.
25. Members should be aware of the excellent work carried out by Area Manager Paul Amos who has facilitated the smooth handover of the project.

### Outstanding Service to Mountain Rescue

26. Area Manager Paul Amos was recently awarded a certificate recognising outstanding service to Mountain Rescue by the executive of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW). This was in recognition of his efforts to build improved relations between Fire and Rescue Services and Mountain Rescue Services at national level and laying the foundation for a future of greater cooperation.
27. Paul has been the CFOA representative to MREW for 3 years. During that period he has worked within the UK Search and Rescue Framework to improve joint working with all voluntary agencies, including the current arrangements within our own Service with West Mercia Police and the Severn Area Rescue Association who are affiliated to MREW. In addition, Paul was instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of MREW in the national flood rescue enhancement project, which will provide more effective flood response throughout the UK.
28. Members may wish to join the Chief Fire Officer in congratulating Paul on this award and also to thank him for all the work he has carried out on behalf of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority over all the years he has been with us (Paul is due to retire from the Service in August 2010).

## Information for Members

### Meeting the Challenge

29. In March of this year Members of the Authority joined Senior Officers, representative bodies and members of staff from across the Service to consider the challenges ahead for the Service, including the anticipated public sector financial pressures, and to share ideas on how the organisation can respond positively to its changing environment. Suggestions from these workshops have helped to inform the Draft IRMP Action Plan for 11/12 being considered by the Authority at this meeting.
30. However, the challenges facing the Authority extend far beyond the scope of its IRMP and work is ongoing to consider wider organisational challenges and changes which will need to be progressed. These include the potential for structural change, exploring opportunities for shared services and efficiencies through closer partnership arrangements and a closer examination of all areas of spend, several of which may need to be progressed in this current financial year. A key aspect of this change programme will be further opportunities for discussion, and the sharing and challenging of ideas will be available to staff, Members and the public as our plans unfold, with final proposals being put to the Fire Authority in due course.

### Corporate Risk

31. At the time of writing there is no known escalation of risks on the National, Local or Strategic risk registers. Ongoing vigilance in areas of finance, human and animal pandemic influenza and terrorist attacks on infrastructure continues. A programme of exercises is planned for 2010-11 for both Service and multi agency involvement to continually test resilience and preparedness to deal with such eventualities. West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF), of which the Service is a member, has been nominated to participate in a national exercise named Exercise Watermark planned for 2011. The Service continues to assist in the preparation for this exercise.
32. Work continues in strengthening continuity plans in order to deliver front-line services and to mitigate disruption.

### Strategic/Budget/Financial Risk

33. Following the recent General Election and the ensuing coalition Government, the Authority is monitoring policy announcements from Communities and Local Government and The Cabinet Office with particular attention being paid to the response to dealing with the national deficit and public spending settlements. A Budget Statement is planned for 22 June and Authority Members will be briefed at the earliest possible opportunity of any implications which may result for the Service.

## Local Incidents to Note

### Fire at Malvern College

34. In excess of 60 radio stations, newspapers and websites reported the fire at Malvern College on Saturday 10 April. The incident was reported nationally on the front page of the BBC website, as well as the Daily Mail, Daily Express and Sun newspaper. Fortunately the accommodation block was empty at the time of the fire, due to the fact that students were away for the Easter holidays. All of the media reports stated that around half of the building was saved thanks to the efforts of the 70 firefighters who were at the scene.

### Factory Fire at Unit in Racecourse Road, Pershore

35. At 06:19Hrs on Sunday 28 March 2010, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service was called to reports of a factory fire at a unit in Racecourse Road, Pershore, Worcestershire. Local on-call firefighters from Pershore were promptly on the scene, followed by crews from Broadway, Droitwich, Evesham, Malvern, Pebworth, Redditch, Stourport, Upton and Worcester. In addition to fire appliances, an aerial ladder platform, a command unit, an environmental protection unit and a water carrier were also brought in to tackle the blaze.
36. On arrival firefighters found the offices at the front of a large factory unit on fire. It was established that gas cylinders and a fuel supply were in the vicinity and, due to explosive risks, a 200m cordon was put in place with the assistance of West Mercia Police Officers, whilst fire crews used breathing apparatus and jets to bring the fire under control and prevent the spread of fire to nearby properties.
37. Throughout the morning over 80 firefighters (including specialist crews) were brought in to tackle the blaze. The Environment Agency was present to ensure watercourses remained clear of potential pollutants. Firefighters were able to stop the spread of fire and by lunchtime damage was limited to the two storey office facilities. The owners were able to recover manufacturing equipment and implement disaster recovery plans – which meant that production could be run a day after the fire.
38. The cause of the fire is currently under investigation.

### Firefighters Receive Certificate of Commendation

39. Three firefighters received a certificate of commendation from the Ambulance Service after they battled to save the life of a lorry driver whose vehicle had been struck by overhead power lines which were carrying 11,000 volts. FF Steve Perks (Kidderminster), Jason Mayhew (Evesham) and Dave Iles (Hereford) administered CPR at the scene of the incident even though electricity was still passing through the vehicle close to where the casualty was lying. Sadly the driver later died in Selly Oak Hospital.

### Malvern Property Fire

40. Firefighters were praised for their efforts by a Malvern shop owner after a fire took hold of the roof of the property. Despite the fire damage caused to the roof, owner Peter Walter said: "The Fire Service was amazing."

## **Worcester University Students in Coach Fire**

41. Students from Worcester University managed to escape unharmed after the coach they were travelling in on the M5 caught fire. Fire crews from Bromsgrove, Redditch, Droitwich and colleagues from West Midlands Fire Service attended the incident. On arrival firefighters found that the fire had spread from the engine compartment to the passenger compartment. Lanes one and two of the motorway between Junctions 4a and 4 were closed whilst the incident was dealt with and the scene made safe.

## **Fire Death in Redditch**

42. On Monday 31 May 2010 the Service received a call from West Mercia Police to assist them with a sudden death in Redditch that had been discovered by them. The fire had clearly been extinguished some time prior to the Service receiving the call. Whilst no direct firefighting action was required the Service attended the scene with two Fire Investigation Officers to support the investigation with the Police. The Service is awaiting information through the Police to confirm the exact cause of death; however, it is reasonable to suspect that this may be a fire related death at this stage.

## **Warndon fires**

43. Firefighters were called to eight separate wheelie bin fires in the Warndon area of Worcester on Sunday, June 13. These were in Bowens Drive, Watercraft, Flyswatter Close, Toll dine Road, Kennedale Close, Rydal Close and two in Furness Close, while there were also reports of a motorbike on fire in nearby Ambleside Drive at 4.51 am and a motorbike cover on fire at 5.45 am in Glen Thorne Avenue during the same morning.
44. A man in his 20s was arrested by West Mercia Police at 6.10 am on Sunday morning in Toll dine Road, Worcester, on suspicion of arson. He appeared at Worcester Magistrates Court on Monday, June 14, charged with two counts of arson with intent to endanger life and two counts of arson. He was remanded in custody and will appear at Worcester Crown Court on Monday, September 13.

## **Firefighter of the Year**

45. At the Spirit of Fire awards ceremony, held at Wembley Stadium on 4 June 2010, Crew Manager Simon Hawkins, who is stationed at Bromsgrove, was announced as the winner of the Firefighter of the Year award by Bruce Forsyth and Barry Cryer. Simon is the UK's only amputee firefighter to return to full operational duties and the award was not only given to recognise his tenacity and determination to return to full duties following a horrific motorcycle accident, but also to recognise that Simon uses his experience to assist other firefighters throughout the UK who are recovering from injuries that threaten their careers. He also voluntarily works with other agencies to assist amputees as well as acting as a role model to others who find themselves in a similar position.
46. Prior to the awards ceremony a number of Chief Fire Officers, including Mark Yates, accompanied Simon and all other nominees to a reception at 10 Downing Street.



## **Pebworth Turf Cutting**

47. On 10 June 2010 the Chief Fire Officer accompanied the Chairman of the Fire Authority to the official Turf Cutting for the new Fire Station at Pebworth. This event marks the start of the building of the station which is due to be completed by the end of the year. The local firefighters from Pebworth, South District Officers and Councillor Tom Bean attended the event prior to all attendees visiting the old station to view the facilities that are to be replaced.

## **Contact Officer**

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