

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

### 13. 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.***

#### Annual Service Level Exercise

2. Each year the Service holds a major training exercise involving a major incident scenario which reflects the challenges that our staff could be faced with when responding in our counties. This year, the scenario was drawn from the National Risk Register for Civil Emergencies and focused on a major incident on our railway network.
3. Exercise Sodor (named after the fictional island used as the setting for the Thomas the Tank Engine series) was a two-part exercise that set out to test the Service's ability to manage a major incident involving a railway collision, carriage derailment and a fire within a rail tunnel.
4. The first part of the exercise was the tunnel element which took place at the Severn Valley Railway in Kidderminster, on the evening of Wednesday 15 October and primarily involved mass casualty management and evacuation from a train on fire inside a tunnel. The second part was based at Shrub Hill Railway Station, Worcester, on the morning of Sunday 19 October and involved two trains and a road vehicle in collision.
5. Both exercises used large numbers of live casualties whose injuries ranged from amputation of limbs and major trauma to groups of distressed 'walking wounded'. Faced with in excess of 200 casualties for both parts of the exercise, all the emergency responders (Police, Fire and Ambulance, alongside Rail representatives) arrived at the scene to encounter all of the complexities and pressures associated with major incidents, the likes of which may only rarely be experienced in anyone's career.
6. The result was one of the most challenging exercises this Service has ever staged, with over 100 firefighters crewing 20 appliances and specialist vehicles attending both parts, along with partner agencies including Police, Ambulance and voluntary responders. All of the responders who attended worked extremely hard together over several hours to resolve a complex scenario that involved the collision of two trains, a car, an unsafe building and multiple fires. The exercise further consolidated the training all blue light responders have recently received as part of the

Government backed Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Procedures (JESIP) program.

7. The multi-agency and internal debrief and evaluation processes will continue over the coming months with much of the exercises being filmed so it can be used in future training scenarios for both the Fire Service and other agencies.
8. The exercises were unanimously agreed to be an overwhelming success by all of those involved, of which there were many and I would pay special thanks to all those who organised and coordinated the exercise and made it such a success.

### **Flat Fire in Kidderminster**

9. The Service was called to a severe flat fire in the Horsefair area of Kidderminster at 21:51hrs on Thursday 27 November. Crews from Kidderminster, Stourport, Bewdley, Bromsgrove and Malvern were all quickly mobilised to the incident with the first crews from Kidderminster arriving within four minutes of receiving the call. On their arrival crews were faced with a severe well developed fire in a first floor flat situated above ground floor shops, making access to the property extremely challenging. Crews quickly deployed a nine metre ladder and ten firefighters wearing breathing apparatus, using a firefighting hose reel, were able to gain access to the property very quickly. Upon entry to the flat they were able to rescue two adults and a child.
10. The Service worked closely with partner organisations, including the Police and Ambulance Service to resolve the incident and the Service's Community Safety Teams and Technical Fire Safety Officers worked closely with the local public and business communities to give advice and reassurance. It is thought that the cause of the fire is suspicious and therefore Fire Investigation Officers are working closely with the Police to determine the exact cause of the fire.

### **Officially opening of Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station**

11. Worcestershire's first joint Police and Fire station was officially opened in Bromsgrove by HRH Princess Alexandra on Thursday 30 October. Princess Alexandra arrived at Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station where the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Lt Col Patrick Holcroft LVO, OBE, presented Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates, the Fire Authority Chairman Cllr Derek Prodger MBE, Chief Constable David Shaw from West Mercia Police, and Police and Crime Commissioner Bill Longmore.
12. Princess Alexandra was given the opportunity to tour the new joint Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station where she met firefighters and viewed fire engines and equipment before talking to volunteers and young firefighters about their work and roles.
13. As well as improving joint working between police and fire colleagues, the new building is a 'greener' and more efficient solution for the town. Solar panels contribute to heating and electricity and lighting sensors and a heating control system combine to minimise the carbon footprint. The rain water is also harvested to provide filtered water to the building, all helping to reduce annual running costs by up to 25%.

## **Malvern Fire Station Re-opening**

14. On Friday 21 November, Malvern Fire Station was officially re-opened by The Hon. Lady Morrison of Madresfield Court, Malvern. Dignitaries, including Chairman of the Authority, and invited guests were given a tour of the Station and facilities by crew members prior to the official unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the occasion.
15. Also present on the day were the children of Cradley Primary School, who were the winners of a competition to create a section of a mural that is now hanging as a permanent centrepiece feature of the Station. The other eight schools who entered the competition will be visiting the Station in the New Year for a tour of the facility.

### **Contact Officer**

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