

7. Service Report

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 October to 31 December 2009.

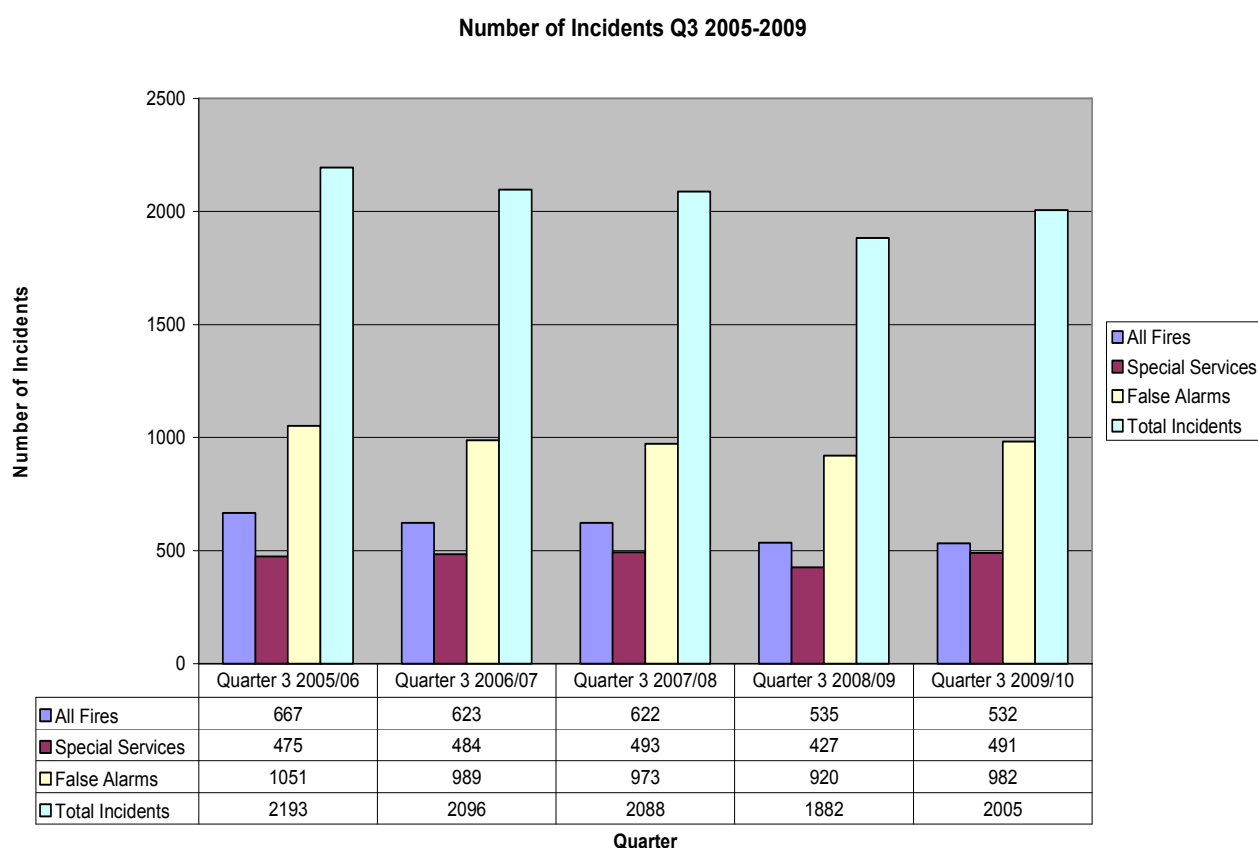
Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Performance

Operational Performance Update Quarter 3 2009-10

2. Figure 1 below demonstrates overall operational activity during Q3 2009-10 compared with the third quarter in the previous 4 years.



3. Total incident numbers for Q3 2009-10 show an increase on the same period last year (2005 incidents compared with 1882) but an improvement on the previous three years' figures. The increase in total incidents compared with the same period last year is due to increases in the number of special services and false alarms incidents attended within those periods.

4. The number of Special Service incidents has increased from 427 in Quarter 3 2008-09 to 491 in Quarter 3 2009-10, an increase of 15.0%. This is due to a 15.9% increase in the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) attended compared to the same period last year (233 RTC incidents in Quarter 3 2009-10 compared with 201 RTC incidents attended in Quarter 3 2008-09) and a 37.2% increase in other special service incidents that are not road traffic collisions or rescues. These miscellaneous incidents include a variety of calls including attendances for effecting entry and assisting other agencies (188 incidents attended in Quarter 3 2009-10 compared with 137 incidents attended in Quarter 3 2008-09).
5. The number of False Alarm incidents has increased from 920 in Quarter 3 2008-09 to 982 in Quarter 3 2009-10, an increase of 6.7%. This is due to a 10.3% increase in Automatic False Alarms (AFA) attended compared to the same period last year (763 AFA incidents attended in Quarter 3 2009-10 compared with 692 AFA incidents attended in Quarter 3 2008-09) and a 5.8% increase in False Alarm Good Intent incidents compared to the same period last year (199 False Alarm Good Intent incidents attended in Quarter 3 2009-10 compared with 188 False Alarm Good Intent incidents attended in Quarter 3 2008-09).

Health and Safety

Incidents and Injuries

| | Total Incidents* | RIDDOR Reportable |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| October – December 2008 | 60 | 12 |
| January – March 2009 | 51 | 3 |
| April – June 2009 | 54 | 11 |
| July – Sept 2009 | 46 | 4 |
| October – December 2009 | 72 | 6 |

*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 to the previous quarter – up from 46 to 72 – and the same period last year – up from 60.
7. The number of incidents reportable under RIDDOR has increased slightly when compared to the previous quarter – up from 4 to 6 – but has fallen significantly when compared to the same period last year – from 12 down to 6.
8. The 6 RIDDOR reportable Health and Safety incidents comprise of:
 - A faulty strap being discovered on a Breathing Apparatus set during a don and start procedure;
 - A firefighter being knocked off his bicycle by a third party when turning in to a call;
 - The electric shower on the 1st floor at Malvern Station short-circuiting and briefly catching fire;

- A sprained ankle being sustained following a slip on the roadway;
 - A broken hand being sustained after tripping up the back staircase at Headquarters; and
 - A leak being found in the demand valve of a Breathing Apparatus set during a post firefighting maintenance check.
9. Again, as identified in previous periods, a significant number of all Health and Safety incidents continue to involve operational personnel (83%). Almost half of these incidents occurred during operational activity, 20% occurred during training activities and 21% occurred during routine activities.
 10. Again this quarter, slip, trip and fall injuries and Manual Handling injuries have continued to remain relatively low, with the largest proportion of incidents this quarter being attributed to exposures to hazardous substances (such as during swift water rescue training), which account for 18% of incidents and impact injuries, which accounted for almost 14% of injuries.
 11. A total of 9 Fleet Health and Safety Incidents were reported this quarter, with 7 of these incidents occurring during routine driving activities. The total number of reported fleet incidents has increased by one this quarter when compared to the immediately preceding quarter, however, during this quarter reported incidents occurred predominantly during routine driving activities (7 incidents).
 12. The number of reported Near Hits and Potential Hazards has remained low as in previous periods, with 10 incidents being reported this quarter; and 11 in the immediately preceding quarter.
 13. These incidents represent only 15% of all reported Health and Safety incidents reported this quarter. This again emphasises the fact that the number of injuries and incidents occurring remains higher than the number of potential hazards and near hits being reported.

Complaints, Concerns, Compliments and Donations

14.

| Q3 | Oct 09 | Nov 09 | Dec 09 | Totals |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Complaints | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Concerns | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Compliments | 9 | 8 | 5 | 22 |
| Donations | 6 | 3 | 2 | 11 |

Information Management

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

| Q3 | FOIA Requests received and completed | DPA Requests received and completed | EIR Requests received and completed | Requests received to date |
|--|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| October 2009 | 23 | 0 | 1 | |
| November 2009 | 26 | 0 | 1 | |
| December 2009 | 22 | 1 | 0 | |
| TOTALS | 71 | 1 | 2 | 74 |
| Requests received January – December 2010 | | | 257 | |

Data Protection Notification

16. The DPA requires that those processing personal information notify the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) that they are doing so, unless their processing is exempt. From 01 October 2009 notification for Public Authorities with more than 250 members of staff is £500 per year. It is illegal under DPA to process data without notifying the ICO and without renewing the annual notification. The Service remains compliant under the Act.

Items of Interest

Resilience Funding to Support Specialist Rescue Teams

17. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is set to receive just over £1m funding to help support rescue teams that can deal with major incidents such as extreme weather, building collapses or terrorism. The Government grant will help the Service further improve its Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), mass decontamination and pumping capabilities.
18. Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Hall has now been appointed to chair the UK's 'National Resilience Board' from the end of March.
19. The extra funding, amounting to £1,043,001, helps HWFRS to provide:
- Two Urban Search and Rescue teams based at Droitwich
 - A search dog and handler
 - Two mass decontamination units based at fire stations in Hereford and Droitwich
 - Enhanced command facilities incorporating advanced satellite communications within Herefordshire
 - High volume pumping vehicles based at Kidderminster (as proved so useful during the floods of 2007).

20. This is one of the largest fleets of its kind outside London. The tragic events in Haiti sadly serve as a reminder of the importance of this kind of capability for dealing with major incidents. Earlier this month, HWFRS technicians assisted in the rescue operation following the gas explosion in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

FiReControl Project

21. In July 2009, it was announced by Communities for Local Government that there would be a further delay to the delivery of the FiReControl Project. This re-scheduled the cutover for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service from May 2011 to March 2012. This delay was as a result of 'technical' difficulties being experienced by the main contractor due to issues with the technology from their key supplier for the proposed mobilising system. Consequently, the contractor has replaced the key supplier and it is reported that this change will not further delay the project.
22. In November 2009, it was reported that a Cross Party Select Committee Enquiry had been ordered into the FiReControl Project. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service submitted evidence in the form of a written memorandum to the enquiry in early January. This document gave an objective view of progress within the project so far, identified causes for time and budget overruns and described actions considered necessary for the project to continue.
23. In response to the latest delay announcement, the Service has reviewed the Strategic Risk Register to assess the impact of the changing circumstances. A number of risks were identified as now requiring attention due to the delay in the provision of the Regional Control Centre (RCC).
24. In order to assess the scale of work required to mitigate some of the identified risks, the Service is now producing a scoping document for a project to replace the existing mobilising command and control system with an interim solution. This is being done in communication with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure collaborative working is maximised and to draw on existing experience within the region.
25. Work within the FiReControl and FiReLink Projects continues and all Chief Fire Officers in the region are due to meet to discuss the 'single date of transfer.' This is an identified date on which all of the FRAs within the region would transfer their Fire Control function and staff to the RCC. This is necessary to ensure that the RCC has sufficient staff to begin their operations.
26. Work has recently commenced to identify suitable methods of transferring data from existing FRS systems into the RCC systems without the need for 'double keying.' This will require significant activity within the Service to identify all data sets that will require an electronic interface and to ensure that existing software suppliers are able to respond to the Service's needs.
27. Rollout of the new radio system provided by the FiReLink Project is now complete in England and will soon be complete in the rest of the UK. This system allows for full interoperability between Fire and Rescue Services, Police and Ambulance Service and will greatly assist in day to day activities and national level incidents. A demonstration of the new equipment was given to FRA Members on 10 February.

28. Planning for the replacement of the appliance mobile data terminals under Phase C of the FiReLink Project has now commenced with a view to rollout of the equipment in Summer 2011.

Warwickshire IRMP

29. Given the consultation responses they have received, Warwickshire have delayed a decision at this point in time and will be considering the consultation responses further before finalising any proposals.

Health and Safety - 'The Pledge'

30. A new strategy was launched by the Health and Safety Executive last year. Included in this updated strategy for the HSE was the publication of 'The Pledge', seeking to encourage employers to affirm their public commitment to advancing health and safety, particularly in the context of the current economic climate. To signify the joint commitment of key stakeholders engaged in progressing health and safety issues within Hereford and Worcester 'The Pledge' will be formally signed up to by Cllr Peter Watts, Authority's Risk Champion, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer as the FRS Senior Officer in charge of health and safety and local representative bodies. There is a Health and Safety Workshop for Members being held on 22 February 2010.

Information for Members

Queen Honours Chief Fire Officer

31. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Fire Officer Paul Hayden has been given the Queen's Fire Service Medal in the New Year Honours List.
32. CFO Hayden, who joined the Service in 1978 and has held the position in Hereford & Worcester since 2005, receives the award in recognition of his distinguished service.
33. His contribution to environment and flooding was been recognised by an award from the International Association of Emergency Managers [IEAM] in 2008, and he was recipient of the US 2008 Higgins and Langley swift water rescue programme development award.
34. After the 2007 floods, he was appointed by Government to represent flood rescue organisations on the Flood Rescue National Enhancement programme.
35. In September 2009 he managed the UK contribution to EU Flood Ex that took place in the Netherlands, the largest ever practical flood exercise the EU has staged.

Corporate Risk

36. The National risk register currently records Pandemic influenza as a high risk. Members will be aware of the current Swine Flu Pandemic within the UK and the Service triggering its Business Continuity Plan to manage the situation. The Service has now moved the Continuity arrangements for Swine Flu to a stand-down position in line with national, regional and local guidance. This has been due to the number cases of swine flu substantially decreasing, however, the Service remains vigilant.

Exercise Boy Scout

37. In December 2009 the Service carried out an exercise to test our ability to deal with a significant loss of staff. Whilst the effects of the Swine Flu Pandemic were tested the Service used the opportunity to test our resilience in the event of the loss of ICT and other support services. A full debrief of the exercise is to take place shortly and the findings collated into an action plan and lessons learnt for future enhancement of resilience arrangements. It is clear from our initial findings that our generic arrangements would fit numerous scenarios around the loss of staff including Industrial Action, Terrorism and Severe Weather.

Severe Weather

38. Work continues in consultation with our Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners on improving the arrangements of multi-agency response and recovery for dealing with severe weather scenarios identified in the Community Risk Register (major flood, high wind, cold weather and heat including drought). Further information will be made available to Members later this year.
39. The annual Friends and Family Carol Service took place for the first time at Leominster Priory on Sunday 20 December 2009. A large number of people came along to the Priory to join in the festivities – members of the public and members of staff and their families. Mince pies and mulled wine were enjoyed afterwards in the Norman Nave at the Priory. The Fire Choir were in attendance and many traditional carols were sung throughout the event. There were readings by members of the Service and the Young Firefighters. Thank you to all those who were involved in the organisation of the service and helped to make this a memorable evening.
40. The FRA Meeting Dates for 2010/11 have now been issued. A copy of the most up to date list is attached as Appendix 1. Please note the change to the September FRA date.

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|--------------------------------|
| Local Incidents to Note |
|--------------------------------|

Cottage Fire in Frankley

41. At 1.05 am on Sunday, December 13, 2009, Fire Control took a call for a house fire on the HWFRS/WMFS border in Frankley Beeches, Frankley. On arrival, crews found a fire on the ground and first floors of a detached residence and one male casualty was led to safety by Fire Service personnel. Crews from Bromsgrove, Redditch and Droitwich attended along with crews from WMFS. A total of 34 firefighters spent more than four hours on the scene. Police and ambulance also attended.

Six Pump Factory Fire

42. Six pumps attended a fire at Rideway Trading, Homme Castle Barns, Shelsey Walsh, near Kidderminster. On arrival at the incident, which happened at just after 8am on Tuesday, December 15, firefighters found the factory was well alight. Six firefighters wore breathing apparatus and used three hose reel jets and two covering jets. The fire, which started at just after 8am, was extinguished by 10.30am. The cause of the fire was a faulty electrical heater.

Twelve Pump Factory Fire

43. Twelve pumps attended a fire at PTS Bathroom Fittings, Washford Drive, Redditch. Crews were called to the incident at 6.20pm on Thursday, December 17. On arrival at the incident firefighters found the showroom well alight. The fire spread to adjacent units and at its height twelve appliances were in attendance, along with two aerial appliances, two CAF appliances, HVP and Water Carrier. Crews worked through the night and fire investigation continued in the morning.

Car Enters Lagoon after Leaving Road

44. A woman was released from a car by firefighters after the vehicle she was travelling in left the road and entered a lagoon. The incident happened on the A4111, at Kington, on Sunday, December 20, at 12.44am. Firefighters from Eardisley and Kington removed the roof of the vehicle and created access through a hedge for paramedics so they could treat the woman. The stop message was given at 2.05am after she was released from the vehicle.

Cylinder Fire behind Hereford Pub

45. Two pumps from Hereford and one pump from Peterchurch attended a fire at St Owen Street, Hereford, on Saturday, January 2 at 3.48am. The incident, which was at the back of The Victory pub, involved a quantity of cylinders. The fire spread into the building and four firefighters in breathing apparatus used three hoses and one jet to deal with the incident. The stop message was given at 5.24am.

Woodburning Stove Fire

46. Two pumps from Worcester were called to a chimney fire at Broad Green, Broadway on Sunday, January 3 at 11.21pm. Chimney gear was used to deal with the wood burning stove fire and the stop message was given at 1.10am.

Car on its Roof Following Whitchurch RTC

47. Firefighters were called to a road traffic collision on the A466 at Welsh Newton, Llancloudy, Whitchurch. The incident happened at 4.45pm on Monday, January 4. On arrival the firefighters from Ross found one car on its roof. One person was trapped and released by the crews and then taken to hospital by ambulance. The stop message was given at 5.25pm.

Carbon Monoxide Detector Alerts Family

48. A family was alerted to a carbon monoxide leak in their home at just after 6.20am on Tuesday, January 5. As soon as the family was alerted they evacuated the property and sought refuge in their car. Two firefighters entered the property wearing breathing apparatus and used a gas monitor. The property was ventilated and the family received medical attention from ambulance crews. The stop message was given at 7.37am.

Young Boy Rescued by Hereford Firefighters

49. On Wednesday, January 6, at just before 1pm, firefighters were called to Belmont Pool, Hereford, following reports of a boy stuck on an island after he had fallen through ice. Specialist rescue crews were brought in to construct an inflatable bridge that was used to rescue the boy. Emergency medical crews were on hand once the boy had been rescued. A number of safety warnings were issued to the media after this incident had taken place. The article featured as the top story on BBC Midlands Today that evening.

Contact Officer

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