

## **Report of the Chief Fire Officer**

### **16. 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.***

#### **Local Government Challenge**

2. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue hosted the final task of the Local Government (LG) Challenge, which is now in its sixth year. This fierce competition involved 10 aspiring future local government chief executives confronted by tough real-life challenges that tackle issues faced by local government.
3. Run by the Local Government Association (LGA), the LG Challenge seeks to identify local government's top talent, promote best practice and highlight the breadth and variety of the challenges for top executives in local government.
4. The contestants had already faced four challenges with other organisations that involved creating strategies, preparing business cases, marketing plans and developing campaigns, which they then put forward to high profile judging panels. The contestants faced their 5<sup>th</sup> and final challenge with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015.
5. The finalists will now attend the LGA's Annual Conference, where they will pitch a project plan that they have developed to benefit local communities. The overall winner will scoop up the prize of the £10,000 Bruce-Lockhart Scholarship, which will assist with implementation of their project.
6. We were delighted to be the only fire service selected to facilitate one of the LG Challenges this year and were extremely excited to see what ideas these talented individuals came up with. The contestants were given the challenges of RDS firefighter recruitment and retention to deal with and were then judged on their business acumen, creativity, problem solving and their ability to be forward thinking and inspire others. Hosting this event was an excellent PR opportunity for the Service as well as obtaining free consultancy from a number of talented individuals on a very important issue.
7. Just like the television show The Apprentice, cameras followed the contestants and there was live-tweeting as the challenge took place. Films of every challenge will be available on the LGA website.

## **Day Crewing Plus (DCP) – Hereford and Worcester Fire Stations**

8. Following the Authority's decision in February of this year in relation to the Community Risk Management Planning process I am pleased to be able to report that both Hereford and Worcester city fire stations went live with the new DCP crewing pattern at 08.00hrs on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May.
9. The new working patterns meant the same speed of response from these two specific wholetime fire engines but with 14 less staff at each location, plus a compliment of Retained Duty staff for the third fire engine. The wholetime staff are now split into two duty patterns with 24 staff crewing one fire engine on a traditional four watch based system and the remaining 12 staff working a self rostering DCP model with a 12 hour working day accompanied by a 12 hour on call period where they respond to emergency calls only and live on station. These staff receive a 25% pay enhancement and overall this duty pattern will provide a saving of £240,000 per annum per location against traditional crewing. This duty system also means that the community we serve in both cities will not see any change to the time it takes to respond or the number of fire engines at each fire station.
10. Between February and May an intensive period of activity was needed to ensure the Service was ready for this new duty system which included extensive property works at Hereford in particular. The provision of a new fire station in Worcester made this task a little easier at that location. Staff at both locations needed to undergo a rigorous selection process to identify those suitable to undertake DCP, those who would remain on the station on the watch based duty systems and those who would be required to work at other locations. As both stations host a variety of other emergency response assets (not just fire engines) such as boats, aerial ladder platforms, off-road vehicles and at Hereford a mass decontamination unit, it was essential that those staff with the most appropriate skills remained at these locations.
11. The DCP system is working well and staff are working hard to make this new way of working a success. I visited these stations on the go live date and was not only impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of staff but also by their determination to make the new arrangement work and how much thought and time has gone into making the transition a success. It is believed that HWFRS is the first Service in the country to run both a DCP, Retained and a traditional watch based duty system at the same location and whilst this will pose some challenges the Service is sure that it has the right people in place to make this work for the two year trial period approved by the Authority.

## **Opening of the new Worcester Fire Station**

12. As well as the commencement of the new DCP shift system on 11<sup>th</sup> May I was extremely proud to witness the operational go-live of the new Worcester Fire Station in McKenzie Way. The transfer from the old location that was occupied for nearly 80 years was an emotional one for some. The transfer was well supported by staff, past and present, on and off duty staff as well as some members of the local community.

13. The new facilities are a substantial achievement for the Authority and provide a state of the art fit for purpose station that is future proof for many years to come. It not only accommodates the full time station staff, but also the complement of on call staff and managers. The building can also be used by the wider Service for meetings, events and could also be the next location to extend our community work with younger people.
14. The new site also has extensive training facilities and can provide staff from around the Service with challenging and interesting training experiences. Feedback from staff so far has been positive on all accounts and it would be remiss not to mention the fantastic job that has been done by a variety of support staff and departments over the last few years in making this new station a reality. The quality of this project and the final outcome is without doubt to the highest standards and without a significant number of “backroom” staff this really would not have been possible.
15. A Members’ visit to key locations in Worcestershire is planned for 29 September which will include a tour of the new Worcester Fire Station to provide all Members with an opportunity to visit the new facilities.

### **New Cabinet Member in Warwickshire – Project Arrow**

16. Councillor John Horner has replaced Councillor Les Caborn as the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Fire and as such will now be the lead contact for all political matters relating to Project Arrow, which looks to identify ways to work more closely with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

### **Provision of Payroll Services**

17. As part of the closer working with Warwickshire FRS through Project Arrow it was identified that Warwickshire County Council was able to provide a payroll service at a competitive rate. Following an analysis of costs, benefits and risks of both routes, the most advantageous solution was to award the contract to Warwickshire County Council. The transfer to the new payroll system was completed with the first payments to staff and Members carried out in April 2015.

### **Public Access Defibrillators at Fire Stations**

18. Building on the Service aim 'to make the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer from fire and other associated hazards', Bromyard Fire Station and Redditch Fire Station now join Kingsland Fire Station in having an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) available to the public 24 hours a day.
19. In Bromyard, donations made by local resident Mrs Kathleen Harris to Hereford Community First Responder scheme enabled the AED to be available to the public at Bromyard Fire Station. The AED is supplied by WMAS NHS Foundation Trust and enables vital lifesaving equipment available to the local community. Although there are several other AED sites in Bromyard this is the first to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The AED is fixed to the external wall of the fire station and is only accessible through a code which is known by appropriately trained staff or through WMAS control centre.

20. In Redditch, the Service entered into an agreement with a registered charity, the Charlotte and Craig Saving Hearts Foundation based in Redditch which works in conjunction with West Midlands Ambulance Service to provide public access defibrillators. This device is located within a coded box fixed to an external wall of Redditch Fire Station and is available 24 hours a day for community use if required. Bromsgrove and Redditch Fire stations have extended an offer to assist with fund raising to provide further defibrillators for other venues

### **United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) Extrication and Trauma Challenges**

21. Following their success at the 2014 Service extrication challenge, the team from Ross on Wye has been busy further developing their skills in extricating casualties from cars involved in crashes. They have attended other regional extrication events within the West Midlands and Hampshire securing a respectable third place at both competitions. It should be noted that the first and second place teams at both events were previous world champions so the standard of skills demonstrated was very high.
22. The level of the team's skill and performance during 2014 has been recognised outside of the Service which led to an invitation to compete at the Holmatro Rescue Experience in Hannover Germany on 8<sup>th</sup> June. This is an international event where 29 teams from 16 different countries respond to a unique realistic 20 minute extrication scenario.
23. The participating countries were; Poland, Hungary, Austria, France, Spain, Italy, UK, Slovenia, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and Canada.
24. Competing teams had a chance of winning one of three sets of rescue tools with a total value of €35,000 and will undertake further training in the latest cutting techniques developed by leading equipment producers.
25. This year's Service extrication challenge was held at Webbs of Wychbold and saw teams from Broadway, Bromyard, Ross on Wye and Worcester competing to represent the Service. As well as Hereford & Worcester teams, two external teams from South Wales and Avon FRS also took part, which is an indication of the standing that Hereford & Worcester teams have with regard to other teams wishing to develop their skills further.
26. This year's extrication challenge was won again by the team from Ross on Wye.

27. In addition to the Extrication Challenge, the Trauma Challenge saw entrants from two Hereford & Worcester Service teams as well as teams from West Midlands and Hampshire Fire and Rescues Services. The Trauma Challenge teams of two are presented with realistic scenarios involving simulated injuries to volunteer casualties. Teams are assessed on their ability to diagnose, treat and stabilise casualties within a set time. Teams use the skills taught within the Service and are assessed by nationally recognised assessors. This year's winning team was James Clarke and Jayne Collins from Kidderminster.
28. The Service is fortunate to have a national trauma assessor as a member of operational staff, Watch Commander Simon Cusack. Simon's skills and ability have been recently recognised internationally when he was nominated as the only United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) assessor to attend the RTC Challenge organised by the World Rescue Organisation in Valencia. Here he worked with 14 teams, leading a number of workshops to teach and share best practice within the trauma discipline.

### **United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) Breathing Apparatus Challenge**

29. This year's Service run offs for the UKRO BA Challenge took place at the newly refurbished strategic training facility at Kidderminster on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015. This year's events saw five teams competing to represent the Service at the national competition to be held at the Fire Service College on 10<sup>th</sup> October. Two teams from both Worcester RDS and Broadway RDS units competed against a mixed team from Hereford and Malvern Wholetime and RDS staff to resolve a complex fire with multiple casualties over two floors. The winners for the third year running were the Worcester RDS 1<sup>st</sup> team with Broadway RDS 1<sup>st</sup> team taking the runner up spot for the second year. The Worcester team will be taking part in the West Midlands Fire Service run offs as practice for the national competition, at which they hope to build on their result of 5<sup>th</sup> place overall (out of 20 teams) which they achieved last year.

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