

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.

CFO Introduction to the Service

2. As part of the first two months in post, I have spent some important time getting to know the Fire Authority in better detail, as well as its constituent local authorities and the wider partnerships they share across both counties. This has included meeting the Fire Authority's Group Leaders on a number of occasions, as well as visiting the leader of Worcestershire County Council, Simon Geraghty, the Chairman of Shropshire Fire Authority, Stewart West, and the new Police and Crime Commissioner, John Campion, with the Chairman Cllr Derek Prodger MBE.
3. From an officer perspective, I have also met with Worcestershire PEG members and senior colleagues in both West Mercia & Warwickshire Police Forces, as well as the neighbouring chief fire officers from Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and the West Midlands.
4. Going forward, I would welcome any further opportunities to engage with Fire Authority members, in order to better understand their local issues and where we can support the safety and wellbeing of their local communities.

Installation of High Sheriffs - Herefordshire and Worcestershire

5. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Richard Lawrence attended the Installation of the High Sheriff of Worcestershire, Sir Nicholas Lechmere Bt. on Wednesday 31 March 2016 at The Shirehall, Worcester.
6. Area Commander Jon Pryce attended the Installation of the High Sheriff of Herefordshire, Mr W.J. Bill Jackson, on Thursday 07 April 2016 at The Shirehall, Hereford.
7. A personal invitation has been extended to each of the High Sheriff's to spend a morning or afternoon visiting the Service during which they will be given an opportunity to meet staff and view a range of activities carried out within their respective Service areas

Health and Safety Peer Review of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

8. In February 2016 a small team of specialist staff from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, led by Assistant Chief Fire Officer John Hodges, were invited to undertake a detailed peer review audit of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's (ESFRS) Health and Safety department and associated functions.
9. The team was based at ESFRS Headquarters in Eastbourne for four days, during which they were able to explore the application and effectiveness of ESFRS strategy, policies, procedures and training provision in the areas of health, safety and welfare in order to provide assurance to ESFRS in respect of its safety culture and to identify potential areas for improvement. The team was able to identify many areas of good practice as well as twenty two potential areas for improvement and enhancement. A full and detailed report was produced by the team and presented to the ESFRS Corporate Management Team in March 2016 who accepted all of the recommendations contained within it.
10. Upon successful completion of this exercise the Audit team were able to share their experiences and learning with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Senior Management Board which has ultimately assisted the Service in refining some of its own internal health and safety arrangements.

Service Exercise 2016

11. On 1st October 2016 crews from across both counties will be attending the annual Service Exercise. The exercise will take place at The Fire Service College, Moreton in Marsh, and will be designed to examine the Service's response to a large scale Road Traffic Collision on the motorway network. All Members are invited to the Service Exercise to observe.
12. As with any operational response the exercise will also involve partner agencies including the Police and Ambulance Services, as well as the Highways agency and the Emergency Planning Teams from local authorities. Staff from all agencies will face testing scenarios involving a wide range of vehicle types and the hazards associated with this type of incident. An effective multiagency response and close cooperation will undoubtedly be required to resolve the scenario effectively.
13. Assets that will be deployed for the exercise include; up to twelve fire engines (including the Service's Ultra heavy Rescue Pumps based at Hereford and Droitwich), the Incident Support Vehicle from Droitwich, the Command Support Unit from Malvern, the Environmental Protection Unit from Stourport as well as the Service's Urban Search and Rescue Team.
14. The planning team are working closely with the Fire Service College and departments from across the Service, as well as volunteers and other agencies, to ensure this year's exercise once again provides a challenging experience with opportunity for a valuable and realistic learning experience for everyone involved.

National Breathing Apparatus Challenge Service Run Off

15. This year's Service BA competition took place at Oldbury Fire house on 23rd April 2016. The event saw five teams fiercely competing for the chance to represent the Service at the national BA challenge which is to be held at the Fire Service College on 8th October 2016. Two teams from Broadway RDS competed against a mixed team from Evesham, a team from Fownhope and a team from Worcester RDS to resolve a complex and testing fire with multiple casualties located over two floors. The previous winners, Worcester RDS were narrowly beaten by Broadway this year with Worcester taking the runner up spot. Both teams going forward are now preparing to build on their result of 2nd place overall (out of 20 teams) in the national competition which Worcester achieved last year.

Young Firefighters Passout

16. This year saw our YFA branches in Redditch and Droitwich take on 24 new recruits between them. The recruits go through a detailed selection process to join their respective branches and then train hard for 13 weeks learning many of the core skills required to become a firefighter. During this time they also take part in fund raising events and many other activities such as walks in the Peak district and the Brecon Beacons. The culmination of their training is the Passout Parade which was recently held at Droitwich Fire Station on 7th May. This year both Branches demonstrated their new skills to over 150 guests including Members of the Authority, local dignitaries, proud parents, grandparents and carers. The grand finale of the parade saw all 24 Young Firefighters arriving together in fire engines with blue lights flashing and sirens blaring followed by a fully coordinated display of their many skills . The branches now move on to raising money for their annual camps this summer where they will be away for a week taking part in a range of adventurous team building activities.

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