

6. Service Report

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 April to 30 June 2009.

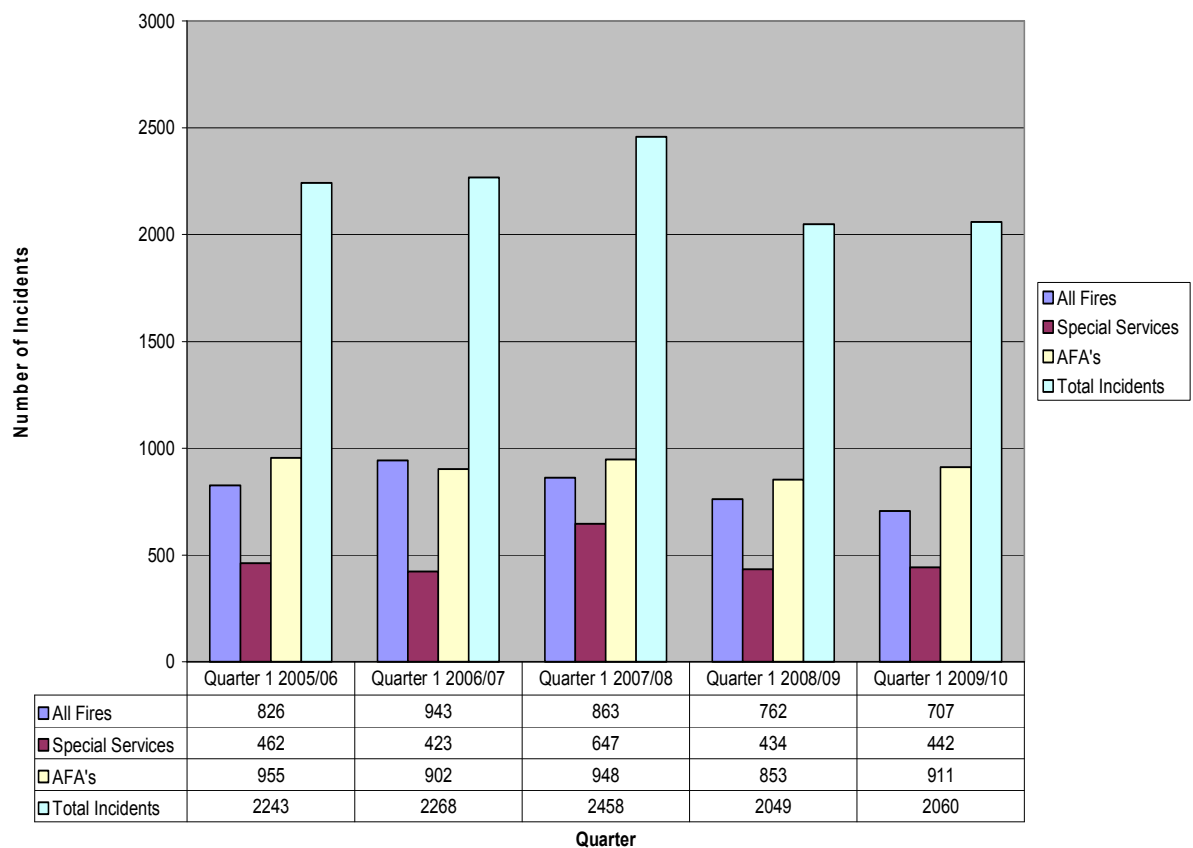
Recommendations

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Performance

Operational Incident Performance Update Quarter 1 2009-10

2. Figure 1 below demonstrates overall operational activity during Q1 2009-10 compared with the first quarter in the previous 4 years.
3. Total incident numbers for Q1 2009/10 show a slight increase on the same period last year (2060 incidents compared with 2049) but still represent a significant improvement on the previous three years figures.



Comprehensive Area Assessment

4. In April 2007, government departments commissioned the main public sector inspectorates to work together to develop and introduce Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). They were also charged with making any other changes they saw necessary in order to implement the White Paper – Strong & Prosperous Communities and to produce more coordinated and better targeted inspection and assessment.
5. During the course of the year, the Audit Commission have met with officers from H&WFRS to discuss the Organisational Assessments. The key dates below set out how the Audit Commission intend to finalise the CAA Assessment in 2009.

19 October 2009	The Audit Commission will e-mail the full narratives and scores that they will be reporting for H&WFRS.
23 October 2009	If H&WFRS wish to request a review of the organisational assessments, including a use of resources and managing performance scores to reach an overall score for the organisational assessment, the Authority must send written notification of the application by no later than 5.00 pm on Friday 23 October 2009.
27 November 2009	Should a review be requested; the Audit Commission will notify of the Authority of the outcome of the review by 5.00 pm on Friday 27 November 2009.
4 December 2009	By 5.00 pm on Friday 4 December 2009 the FRA will receive a copy of the full narrative and scores. This will be provided under embargo and the Audit Commission have asked that we respect this embargo.
10 December 2009	The results of all the CAA 2009 assessments will be published on the oneplace website on Thursday 10 December 2009.

Performance Management Framework

6. All public authorities, including the Fire and Rescue Authority, currently face a number of significant challenges. Budgets are tighter than ever before and we need to prepare for further pressures in the coming years, scrutiny and audit of our performance is more robust than ever. The requirement to maintain a strong performing authority in this challenging environment puts significant pressures on staff and the Service.
7. In June 2009, the Policy Planning & Performance Team developed a Performance Management Framework for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority (H&WFRS) to drive forward continuous improvement. It establishes the planning infrastructure to monitor and manage service improvement and risk, whilst enhancing and embedding awareness throughout all levels of the Authority. This document was considered by the Best Value Committee on 8th September 2009.

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Health & Safety Incidents and Injuries

8.

	Total Incidents	RIDDOR Reportable
April – June 2008	37*	4
July – Sept 2008	53*	10
October – December 2008	60*	12
January – March 2009	51*	3
April – June 2009	54*	10

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

Analysis

9. The number of reported Health & Safety Incidents/Injuries this first quarter of 2009-10 has increased slightly when compared with the immediately preceding quarter (up from 51 to 54), but has increased by almost 46% when compared with the same quarter last year. However, when the figures for each quarter throughout the year are examined, the number of total incidents reported during this quarter appears to be fairly typical.
10. Analysis of the number of incidents reportable under RIDDOR has highlighted a significant increase on the previous quarter. However, when the figures for the rest of the year are considered, the number of RIDDOR incidents reported during this quarter again appears to be fairly typical.
11. Furthermore, of the 10 incidents reported, 9 only became reportable as a result of the injured person being absent from work for more than three days. Of these 9 incidents, over half were as a result of manual handling activities, and many involved aggravating previous injuries when donning items such as fire boots or Breathing Apparatus kit.
12. This quarter analysis of all reported incidents has shown that both slip, trip and fall injuries and manual handling injuries have increased when compared to both the immediately preceding quarter, and the same quarter last year (slip, trip and fall injuries = 6 this quarter, 2 immediately preceding quarter and 5 during the same quarter last year. Manual handling injuries = 9 this quarter, 2 immediately preceding quarter and 5 during the same quarter last year).
13. However, impact and contact injuries have shown a steady reduction, with 7 reported this quarter, 8 in the immediately preceding quarter and 10 during the same quarter last year. The most significant number of incidents reported, however, were records of exposure to hazardous materials. These amounted to 12 this quarter, compared with 2 in both the immediately preceding quarter and same quarter last year. These reports relate to non injuries and record potential or actual exposure for example to fires where asbestos was found to be present or in-water rescues.
14. Operational staff continue to dominate the figures, accounting for 61% of all incidents, while the number fleet incidents encouragingly has reduced dramatically to 5 in total, with only 2 occurring whilst responding to incidents and no injuries being sustained by either fire service personnel or third parties.

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15. Two Specialist investigations were instigated this quarter. One related to a collision involving an appliance responding to a call and a third party where no-one was injured, the other related to an air leak on a Breathing Apparatus set occurring during training.
16. The number of reported near hits & potential hazards has remained reassuringly high, with these accounting for 59% of all incidents reported.

Complaints, Concerns, Compliments and Donations

17.

Q1	April 09	May 09	June 09	Totals
Complaints	5	5	1	11
Concerns	2	1	4	7
Compliments	3	5	8	15
Donations	1	1	3	5

Information Management

18.

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

Q1	FOIA Requests received and completed	DPA Requests received and completed	EIR Requests received and completed	Total Requests received in Q1
April 2009	20	0	1	
May 2009	14	0	0	
June 2009	19	0	0	
TOTALS	53	0	1	54
Requests received January – July 2009 (Q4/Q1)			121	

Items of Interest

FloodEx 2009

19. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is co-ordinating the UK's response to the European Union's biggest ever emergency exercise which will take place in September. The exercise, will involve responses from the UK, Poland, Holland, Sweden and Estonia. The event will simulate the tidal surge that devastated the UK and Holland in 1953 resulting in over 2,000 fatalities.

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20. The UK came close to a repeat of that disaster in November 2007, when sea defences on parts of the East Coast came within centimetres of being overtopped. On that occasion Chief Fire Officer Paul Hayden was asked to direct flood rescue operations in Norfolk and Suffolk, with the Worcester Flood Command Centre coordinating responding flood rescue teams from the fire and rescue service and voluntary agencies.
21. CFO Hayden, who led national flood rescue efforts in 2007, was recently appointed by government to represent all flood rescue services on the national programme board responsible for delivering a new flood rescue capability.
22. Although a number of volunteers from Hereford and Worcester will be given the opportunity to practice their skills during the exercise no front line service will be affected. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service will not pick up any costs associated with the event and will 104,000 Euros (£90,000 approx) to co-ordinate the UK's response to the exercise, which will include representatives from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Midlands Fire Service and Fire Services in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

Pandemic Flu Update

23. Managers across the Service are meeting regularly with Local Authorities, Health Trusts and other partner organisations so that we can continue to monitor the national, regional and local situation. We will continue to do this for as long as is necessary.

Listed below are the issues contained in the latest briefing received from the Government.

- There is a clear indication that the number of cases in England has decreased significantly in the past few weeks. Weekly GP consultation rates decreased over the last few weeks in England, coinciding with the implementation of the National Pandemic Flu Service.
- The majority of cases continue to be mild and there is no sign that the virus is changing. It is not becoming more severe or developing resistance to anti-virals.
- It is important to stress that people with underlying health conditions, pregnant women, and parents with children under the age of one should speak to their GP if they have symptoms.
- Some people find that they get better by staying in bed, drinking plenty of water and taking over the counter flu medication.

Epidemiology analysis suggests children are more susceptible to the virus than adults and are more infectious when ill. Whilst the rates of flu symptoms and related activity continue to fall in England there is a small increase in Scotland. The schools in Scotland returned in August therefore, with this information in mind the Service will monitor the situation now that our schools have returned and many people return to work.

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24. The Corporate Risk Management Group is currently meeting on a regular basis and staff sickness levels are being closely monitored. One of the key features of the Service's business continuity plan is the activation of the Resilience Register to maintain crewing levels to ensure the impact of the flu pandemic is kept to a minimum.

Equipment Update

25. All existing Breathing Apparatus is currently planned for replacement with new equipment that will further improve firefighter safety through the introduction of electronic systems and radio telemetry between wearers inside a building and Controllers outside. The Apparatus is to be standardised throughout four of the five services within the West Midlands region (Shropshire being tied into an existing contract.) Training for all staff is currently being rolled out and will be completed before the planned use of the new equipment from April 2010. All of the new equipment can be serviced at the Operational and Logistics Centre at Betony Road. In addition, new work wear for firefighters and technicians which is now being ordered, is likely to be introduced later in 2010.

USAR Opening

26. Ms Jacqui Smith, MP for Redditch visited Droitwich Fire Station on Friday July 10 to officially open the Urban Search and Rescue Training Facility (USAR). During her visit she was given the opportunity to meet members of Service personnel who have been involved in the development of USAR and its training facility, she went on a tour of the site and met the USAR team. Following a tour of the training facility Ms Smith unveiled a plaque officially opening the building.

Information for Members

Members' Seminars

27. The Members' Seminars Programme commenced on 15 July with the Members' Induction Day, which was attended by 10 Members, and followed by a visit to the Operational Logistics Centre at Betony Road. A second Induction Seminar has now been arranged for 9 September for new Authority Members who were unable to attend the first event. Following this Seminar, it is anticipated that all new members will have attended Induction Seminars.
28. The Treasurer and the Director of Finance presented a Financial Training Seminar to 13 Members prior to the Budget Committee Meeting on 30 July.
29. The Authority's Standards Committee Members attended Joint Standards Committee Training provided by Worcestershire County Council on 10 July 2009.
30. A Members' Seminar on the Integrated Risk Management is scheduled for 1 September and there is a session on the Performance Framework on 7 September. The Best Value, Policy & Performance Committee have a session prior to the Committee meeting on 8 September. Forthcoming events are Financial Management on 14 October and Standards and Ethics on 3 November.
31. Members are encouraged to continue the high level of participation at these Events.

Members Visits to Fire Stations and Departments

32. The Authority considers Members' visits to Stations to be an important means of communication between Members and frontline Service crews. Following on the experience gained from previous years, the programme of visits and the procedures have been revised to encourage greater participation and effectiveness.
33. This year's programme commenced at Bromyard on 23 July, and since then Members have visited stations at Kingsland, Fownhope, Ross-on-Wye and Hereford. The other stations included in the 2009 programme are Pebworth, Pershore, Malvern and Bewdley. A Members' visit to the Planning, Policy and Performance department at Headquarters is scheduled for 25 November.
34. Group Leaders appreciate the participation by Members and crews in these visits, and any Members wishing to visit the remaining Stations should contact them as soon as possible.

Health and Safety Activities

35. This year's Health & Safety training strategy is now being implemented with the following training being delivered to over 130 staff over the next few months:
 - IOSH Managing Safely training for Watch Managers;
 - IOSH Managing Safely training for Non-operational Supervisors and Managers;
 - Control of Substances Hazardous for Health Assessment training for station and department representatives;
 - Risk Assessment training for station and department representatives;
 - Managing Display Screen Equipment for certain locations;
 - Conflict Resolution and Personal Safety for key staff.
36. This training will assist the organisation in achieving the following levels of competence:
 - Qualification for all Watch Managers and non-operational Supervisors and Managers in Managing Safely;
 - One trained person per watch and department in managing substances hazardous to health;
 - One trained person per watch and department in conducting Risk Assessments;
 - One trained person per station and department in managing Display Screen Equipment;
 - Competence and confidence in being able to identify and manage confrontational behaviour and ensure personal safety for key staff.
37. This will be supported by the training and appointment of additional Specialist Investigation Officers to undertake specialist investigations into certain more serious Health & Safety incidents and further familiarisation sessions for senior managers in how to instigate and manage the Specialist Investigation process.
38. An Audit of the Service's Health & Safety Management Systems was completed in April. It is anticipated that this will be supported by a series of local audits which will then be used to develop local and strategic Health & Safety Plans.

Local Incidents to Note

Gas Cylinders Cooled Down for 24 hours following Fire

39. A 24 hours exclusion zone was enforced following a fire in a car that spread to a garage compound where a number of acetylene, propane and oxygen cylinders were stored at Sherwood Road, Breme Park Industrial Estate, Bromsgrove. Two crews from Bromsgrove were in first attendance on Thursday evening June 25 and the incident was closed 24 hours later. Ground monitors were used to cool the cylinders. No one was injured and no cylinder exploded

Three Hour Cordon Enforced after LPG Leak from Landrover

40. Two crews from Bromsgrove put in a safety cordon around a Landrover and allowed approximately 60 litres of liquid petroleum gas to vent. The incident at the MSF forecourt, Brickhouse Lane, Stoke Prior, lasted for three hours during which time the road was closed, the store was evacuated and the firefighters used two water wall sprays to disperse the gas.

Disposable BBQ Starts Hills Fire

41. A disposable BBQ left unattended set fire to a small area of grass on the Malvern Hills on Sunday afternoon, June 28. A Malvern crew used a backpack to extinguish the fire. Twenty minutes earlier, the same crew had put out a bin fire near the car park at West Malvern Quarry

Teenager Rescued from River Arrow

42. A teenage boy was pulled to safety from the River Arrow at Forge Mill Lane, Redditch on Sunday evening June 28. The boy, who is believed to have been pushed into the eight foot deep river by another boy, was rescued by crews from Redditch. The boy was found clinging to the side of the riverbank suffering from the onset of hypothermia. He was treated by paramedics.

Teenager Drowned in River Severn

43. The body of a 17 year old boy was recovered from the River Severn on Monday, June 29 following a two and a half hour search by Fire Service boat crews from Worcester and Evesham. They were assisted by crews from Droitwich and Malvern together with volunteers from Mercia Inshore Rescue and Severn Area Rescue Association, Police and the Air Ambulance. Officers gave interviews and briefings to local/regional and national broadcast/press reporters which included warnings about the inherent dangers of swimming in open water.

Two People Cut Free after RTC near Kidderminster

44. Two Kidderminster crews cut free two people from two cars that had collided on the A448 at Mustow Green on the afternoon of Wednesday, July 1. A woman was carried by firefighters and paramedics to the Midland air ambulance and taken to Selly Oak Hospital and the other casualty was taken to hospital in Worcester by land ambulance.

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Trapped Driver Airlifted to Hospital

45. On Sunday Morning at 07:39 retained crews from Ross and Whitchurch were mobilized to the A4137, St Owens Cross; 'RTC persons trapped'. On arrival, it was found that the teenage driver had suffered spinal injuries. Working with paramedics, crews released the injured teenager, who was then conveyed to hospital by air ambulance immobilized on a spinal board with neck collar. Crews also assisted police looking for a possible second casualty by using a thermal imaging camera however no second casualty was found.

Road Shut as Fuel Tanker Overturns

46. An 800-metre cordon was put up around a gas tanker after it overturned on the B4084 at Stoulton, near Worcester, shortly after 8.15am on Friday, July 10, 2009. The road was shut for almost five hours as emergency services pulled the tanker upright. The driver suffered a cut to his arm in the incident and was treated by paramedics at the scene. HWFRS sent crews from Worcester, Droitwich, Pershore and Evesham to the incident, along with an Environmental Protection Unit.

Fourteen Children Hurt as Coaches Crash

47. Fourteen children were taken to hospital on Tuesday, July 14, 2009, after two school coaches crashed in Worcester. The coaches, which were travelling northbound on the A449 towards Kidderminster, collided with a silver Vauxhall Zafira coming in the opposite direction at around 10am. Five fire appliances and six ambulances were called to the scene near Claines Island. Two adults and 14 children from the coaches, along with the female car driver, were taken to Worcestershire Royal Hospital with minor injuries.

Two Fires at Former Snooker Centre – Arson Suspected

48. A fire broke out in the derelict building of the former Westside Snooker Centre, Hylton Road, Worcester, on Thursday, July 16, 2009. A total of four crews from Worcester and Malvern were called to the 'persons reported' incident, at about 9pm. All persons were accounted for and no-one was injured.
49. The derelict building was destroyed by a second fire on Saturday July 18. Crews from Worcester and Malvern were in attendance for most of the day. A USAR team was also called in to assess the structure of the building.

Cross- Border Co-operation Tackles Barn Blaze

50. Fire crews from Gloucestershire and Hereford & Worcester spent the weekend of 11 July at a major blaze in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. Emergency services were called at 4.16pm on Saturday 11 July after fire broke out in a metal-plated barn containing straw and silage. Crews from Broadway, Bromsgrove, Bromyard, Droitwich, Evesham, Fownhope, Hereford, Ledbury, Malvern, Pebworth, Pershore, Ross, Stourport, Upton, Whitchurch and Worcester attended, along with colleagues from Gloucestershire. Fire crews left the scene on Tuesday afternoon.

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Tenbury Crews Rescue 80 year old Man from Bungalow Fire

51. A BA team from Tenbury rescued an 80 year old man from a fire in his bungalow at Border Way, Tenbury Wells on Saturday night, July 18. The man, who lives alone, had fallen over in his living room and had accidentally knocked over an electric fire onto the carpet where he lay. The man was unable to get to his feet as the fire and smoke set off the working alarms. The man was taken to Hereford County Hospital suffering from burns and smoke inhalation. A second BA team also entered the property and rescued the man's pet small terrier dog.

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