



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

2017/18 Annual Report to Worcestershire County Council

Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

1. Councillor R J Phillips, from Herefordshire Council, was elected as Chairman of the Authority and Councillor P Tuthill, from Worcestershire County Council, was elected as Vice-Chairman.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected

2. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected the Fire Service in July. The inspection assessed and reported the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service. This included how well the Service prevents, protects against and responds to fires and other emergencies and how well they look after the people who work for the Service.
3. The HMICFRS are still finalising the inspection report (expected publication date in early December), and a briefing will be prepared for the Fire Authority when details are known.

Wyre Forest Hub

4. The development of the Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub was approved at the Fire Authority meeting in October 2016.
5. A large part of the funding for the project was provided by the Government Transformation Fund grant of £2.38m with the balance coming from a mix of capital receipts from the existing sites and capital borrowing by the Authority.
6. The land purchase was completed in June 2017 to provide a new fire station for the Wyre Forest area, the design also incorporates office accommodation for the West Mercia Police 'Harm Hub' team, boat storage and facilities for Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) and improved storage and training facilities for the High Volume Pump (HVP) which has previously had to be parked in the open at Kidderminster fire station.
7. Planning permission for the new Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub was approved on 20 March 2018 by Wyre Forest District Council.
8. A ground-breaking ceremony took place on 26th October to commemorate the commencement of the build.

Fire Service Headquarters move to Hindlip Park

9. Following an application for government transformation funding by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), supported by West Mercia Police (WMP), a grant award was received of £1.886m to enable the co-

location and appropriate integration of HWFRS Headquarters and Control Room functions with West Mercia Police at Hindlip Park.

10. By 1st November 2018, Fire Service Headquarters moved from 2 Kings Court to Hindlip Park. The Kings Court premises is being leased to Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust.
11. The success of the move was only made possible by extensive planning and effective management of this complex change programme by the programme team, which notably included a significant ICT and telephony relocation and upgrade project for both the HQ functions and the Control Room, led by the Service's ICT team.

Strategic Alliance with Shropshire Fire Authority – Fire Alliance Plan approved

12. On 12th September 2018, Members approved the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.
13. The alliance will enable collaborative work between the two Services, examples of which include the Fire Control resilience project and the joint initiative to train West Mercia Police Community Support Officers to become On-Call Firefighters across the three counties. It also supports the new Policing and Crime Act (2017) statutory duty for emergency services to collaborate in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.
14. The alliance extends the existing collaboration arrangements into a more planned and structured formal alliance, which will deliver real benefits in terms of aligning processes and procedures, as well as sharing resources, experience and expertise. It would also provide both Services with the capacity and resilience to remain sustainable in the medium and longer term.
15. The governance framework will be headed by a Strategic Alliance Board, consisting of Member representatives of the Fire and Rescue Authorities and the two Chief Fire Officers, which will oversee delivery of the alliance plans and programmes. It is proposed that the Fire Authority is represented on the Board by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Board will be supported by a Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board, which will be responsible for managing the process of change, and a number of Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups, which will develop and deliver projects.

Fire Control move into the new Operational Communications Centre

16. On 18 April, Fire Control successfully became fully operational at the newly constructed Operational Communications Centre (OCC) based at Hindlip Park.
17. They joined the Operational Policy Department as well as several teams from West Mercia Police, Worcestershire County Council's Emergency Planning team and Safer Roads Partnership's Casualty Reduction team, who were already working from the new site.

Operational Activity

18. During the Winter months when Storm Emma and the 'Beast from the East' swept across the two counties - seriously affecting homes, businesses and the transport network - the Service's plans and preparations ensured that it was able to continue responding effectively to support local communities, if and when the need arose. In addition, the Service proactively supported other partners during this period of extreme cold weather by helping them to continue responding effectively as well, such as by using the Service's 4 x 4 capability to help doctors and nurses get out to their patients in rural areas.
19. During the Summer months, in contrast, there was a surge in grass fires and other fires in the open due to the sustained dry hot weather. Having said this, due to the proactive media campaign by the Service (reminding the public of outdoor safety advice), coupled with the quick and professional response from the operational crews throughout the two counties, there were no incidents that escalated into something more significant. In terms of mutual aid, the Service also sent a Tactical Advisor trained in wild fires to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to assist with the large moorland fires they experienced at this time.

**Cllr R Phillips, Chairman and Cllr P Tuthill, Vice-Chairman
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority**

FURTHER INFORMATION is available in the Fire Authority Annual Report 2018/19 on the Service's website at www.hwfire.org.uk/your-right-to-know/our-publications/