



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Annual Report to Worcestershire County Council

10 November 2016 – Agenda item number 6

Authority Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2016/17

1. Councillor D W Prodger MBE, from Worcestershire County Council, was re-elected as Chairman of the Authority and Councillor R J Phillips, from Herefordshire Council, was re-elected as Vice-Chairman.

Chief Fire Officer

2. Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates retired on 31 March 2016 following permission granted by the Authority in December 2015. Mr Yates commenced with Hereford & Worcester in 2010 and retired with over 32 years continuous service.
3. The Authority have appointed Nathan Travis BA (Hons), MPA (Warwick) as Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. With almost 23 years spent in the fire service Mr Travis has most recently served as Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (OFRS).
4. During his time at OFRS, Mr Travis has faced challenging operational incidents, most notably wide-area flooding in Gloucestershire in 2007 and Oxfordshire in 2013/2014 – and most recently the major building collapse at Didcot power station.
5. On a national level, Mr Travis leads the environment and sustainability reference for the Chief Fire Officers' Association, which involves liaising closely with the Environment Agency to identify areas where the fire service can work more closely with them to help prevent and mitigate injury to people and damage to their communities as a result of major weather-related events.

Performance

6. The Service attended 6,459 incidents in 2015-16. This was 347, or just over 5%, more than last year. Although we expect there to be fluctuations up and down in the number of incidents from year to year, we still analyse the underlying causes, with the aim of improving our targeted prevention activities. Despite the increase, though, the overall trend continues to be downward, and this year's total is still the second lowest total in the ten years we have collected data in this way.

Budget Savings

7. Since the start of the 'austerity' period in 2010-11, the Fire Authority's annual revenue budget has reduced by 16 per cent in real terms. Taking into account the additional running costs over the last five years, such as inflation pressures, national pay rises, tax increases and maintenance of property and equipment, this has resulted in a headline budget reduction from £32.6 million in 2010-11 to £32.0 million in 2016-17.
8. In order to meet these pressures, we have made reductions in our workforce, including managers and support staff, made changes to crewing at fire stations, cut our spending budgets and removed two fire engines from the fleet. By 2019-20 the full implementation of these measures will be saving £6.7 million per year.
9. The External Auditors issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2015/16 financial statements and an unqualified Value for Money Conclusion on 27 September 2016.

Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020

10. Following the agreement of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) the Fire Authority approved a two-year trial period of the voluntary Day Crewing Plus (DCP) duty system for the second fire engines at Hereford and Worcester. Both Hereford and Worcester fire stations went live with the new DCP crewing pattern on Monday 11 May 2015 and the system continues to provide 24/7 availability for the second appliance. A review of the trial is currently underway and the findings will be reported to the Fire Authority in due course.

Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub Station Consultation Update

11. Following a Transformation Fund award of £2.38 million from Government to involve the relocation of three existing fire stations into a single, central hub and co-location of multiple partners (West Mercia Police, Severn Area Rescue Association and the British Red Cross) the Authority conducted a public consultation programme. Facilitated by an independent social research specialist, Opinion Research Services (ORS), the process ran for 12 weeks between 1 September and 27 November 2015. The consultation returned 192 completed questionnaires, 10 written submissions and one petition in addition to numerous public and stakeholder meetings and forums.
12. ORS concluded that overall there was an even balance between the level of support and the level of opposition to the proposals but emphasised that the consultation was about the principle of establishing a hub station and noted that

many respondents felt unable to form a definitive view without knowing the proposed location of any hub. As a result the Authority approved a further phase of consultation running from 4 July to 9 September 2016 to seek the views and opinions of staff, local communities and their representatives to ensure that all views were considered on the two preferred locations for the hub both on Stourport Road in Kidderminster.

13. At the meeting on 11 October 2016, the Fire Authority gave the go ahead to proceed with the Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub and decided on the location. This will be disclosed once negotiations on the site have taken place. Unfortunately we are unable to disclose the chosen location any sooner as it could jeopardise securing the site. The new hub will be a great asset to the Service and to the Wyre Forest community. Not only will it result in greater collaboration between emergency services, but it will also provide more sustainable retained emergency cover than at present and allow teams to work together more effectively in areas such as prevention and enforcement.

Dying 2 Drive

14. As part of the Service's suite of community safety initiatives the Dying 2 Drive scheme, which has successfully run for a number of years throughout Herefordshire took place for the first time in Worcestershire in September 2016. The multi-agency road safety scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Worcestershire had 8 schools signed up, with 380 young people attending the sessions at the new Worcester Fire Station.
15. The events commenced with a hard hitting road traffic collision reconstruction, involving all of the emergency services and live casualties. The reconstructions were closely followed by powerful, interactive workshops run by the Fire & Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, Safer Roads Partnership, West Midlands Ambulance Service and St John Ambulance. During these workshops, the consequences of bad decisions were explored and, amongst other activities, students were shown how to perform live saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
16. The feedback received has been exceptional with schools commenting upon the clarity of the key safety messages together with the impact the sessions had on the young people who took part.
17. Work is already underway to attract even more schools to next year's event.

Evesham Fire Station

18. Work on a new fire station in Evesham complete with a strategic training facility, which will allow for more advanced training is nearing completion. The build is progressing well and is on target for its completion date at the end of November. The location of the new station near the leisure centre is an excellent site for our purposes, being close to the existing fire station and with good access to the main road network.

Worcester Fire Station

19. His Royal Highness, The Duke of Gloucester, officially opened the new Worcester Fire Station on 19 November 2015. The new station offers much improved modern welfare amenities as well as a much needed training facility. The new training rig allows for more advanced training exercises and allows firefighters to further prepare for many different types of fires and rescues ultimately allowing us to deliver the best service we can to the communities we serve. The building also has provision for the Young Firefighters Association and has multi-use lecture facilities. Fit-for-purpose and energy efficient the station will provide significant savings in the long-term future.

Operational Communications Centre

20. Work has now commenced on the new Operations Communications Centre (OCC) located at Hindlip Park in Worcester, where Fire Control staff will co-locate with West Mercia Police in the future.

21. A turf-cutting ceremony took place on 7 October to celebrate the start of build. The OCC, which will be jointly shared between HWFRS and West Mercia Police, is anticipated to be completed by the end of December 2017. The sharing of facilities allows for quicker deployment and closer working for incidents where both the police and fire service are required, whilst reducing overheads for both organisations. Co-locating Fire Control staff with the police will also result in improved working relationships, better management of incidents through joint sharing of intelligence and data, and a better service for the public.

National Flood Relief December 2015

22. Firefighters were despatched to assist with flood relief efforts in the north of England as part of a national deployment programme. On 28 December 2015, the Service was requested to immediately mobilise a high volume pump (HVP) and hose module to Lancashire. A Type B boat team (powered boat and advanced water rescue) from Droitwich was also deployed to assist. During this

period of flooding, a HVP Tactical Advisor was also mobilised on two occasions to offer technical support and advice.

23. The feedback from the deployments indicate that both crews were clearly regarded as highly skilled, equipped and motivated and provided assistance to significantly affected communities.

Members' Allowances

24. Members voted that the level of Members' Allowances for 2016/17 be increased by 0.2% in line with the Consumer Price Index.

Cllr D W Prodger MBE
Chairman – Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

FURTHER INFORMATION is available on the Service's website at www.hwfire.org.uk/your-right-to-know/our-publications/