



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire and Rescue Authority

AGENDA

Policy and Resources Committee

**Wednesday 25 January 2012
10.30 am**

**Conference Suites 1, 2 & 3
Headquarters,
2 Kings Court,
Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester
WR5 1JR**

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- 2 Tackle the fire with the appliances available – **IF SAFE TO DO SO**.
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WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY’S MEETING. These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 25 Councillors and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 Herefordshire Council Councillors.

Agenda Papers

Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

Chairman

The Chairman, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting, sits at the head of the table.

Officers

Accompanying the Chairman is the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers of the Fire and Rescue Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

The Business

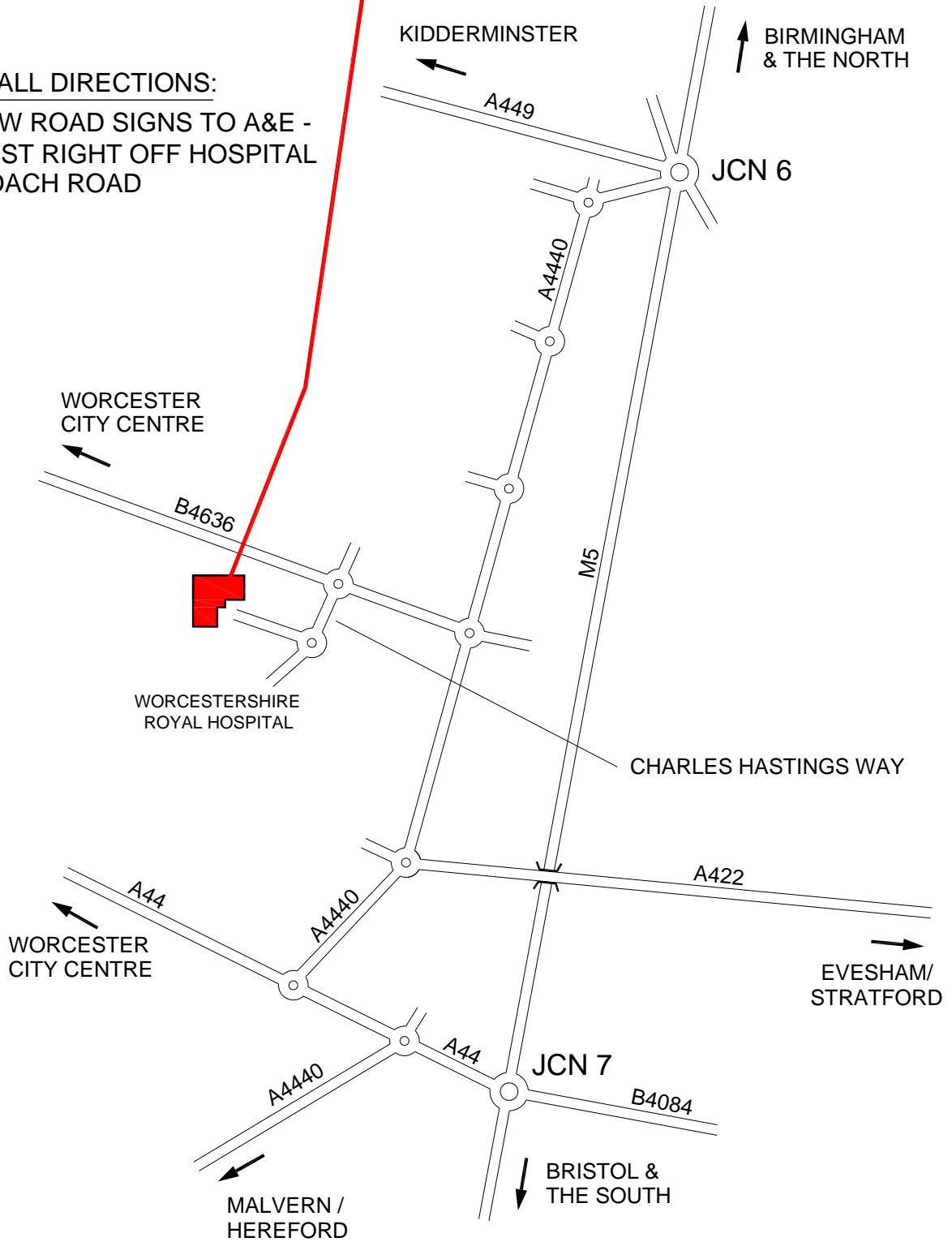
The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

Decisions

At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Councillors to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.

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Agenda

Members

Mr K Taylor (Chair), Mr G Yarranton (Vice-Chair)
Mr T Bean, Mr B Bullock, Mrs M Bunker, Mr J Campion, Mrs L Eyre , Mr A Hardman, Brigadier P Jones CBE, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes, Mrs J Potter, Mr D Prodger MBE, Mr C Smith, Mr D Taylor, and Mr R Udall.

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. Named Substitutes To receive details of any Member of the Authority nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. Declaration of Interests (if any) The Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare any interests against an Agenda item, the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. If a Councillor has a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay, take part and vote in the meeting. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is and leave the meeting room for the duration of the item. This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.	
4. Confirmation of Minutes To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2011 (copy attached).	1 - 6
5. Budget 2012/13 and Review of Medium Term Financial Plan To review the current position in relation to budgets for 2012/13 and beyond.	7 - 18

6. West Midlands Contractor Framework	19 – 21
<p>To inform Members of the formation of the West Midlands Contractor Framework and the Authority's involvement in the consequent Partnering Agreement involving Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police and the Fire and Rescue Authority and to seek approval of the use of Standing Order 5.1.f in awarding contracts under the framework.</p>	
7. Retaining Staff with Specialist Skills	22 - 36
<p>To bring to the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee issues relating to potential skills gaps in the Service as a result of the potential changes to pension provisions and to seek agreement to a policy that mitigates the potential for this to happen.</p>	
8. Updates to Work Programme 2011/12	37 - 39
<p>To consider and amend as appropriate the Work Programme of the Policy and Resources Committee.</p>	
9. Budget Monitoring 2011/12	40 - 45
<p>To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2011-12.</p>	
10. Fees and Charges	46 - 48
<p>To update the Committee on progress in implementing the Fire and Rescue Authority decision on charging.</p>	
11. IRMP 2011/12 Update – Review of the Provision of Operational Training and Development	49 - 57
<p>To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcomes of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011/12 Objective No. 6, the Review of Operational Training and Development.</p>	
12. IRMP 2011/12 Update – Review of the Community Safety Department	58 - 71
<p>To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcomes of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011/12 Objective No. 2, the Review of the Community Safety Department.</p>	

13. Fire Fighting Water Supply	72 - 75
To provide a summary of the current position with respect to the provision, inspection and maintenance of water supplies and to request support with a national campaign to change legislation, which would benefit the Fire and Rescue Authority.	
14. Joint Consultative Committee Update	76 – 77
To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held during December 2011.	
15. Exclusion of the Press and Public	
In the opinion of the Clerk to the Authority the meeting will not be, or is not likely to be open to the public at the time item 16 is considered for the following reason:	
Item 16 is likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Authority.	
16. Asset Management Strategy : Worcester Fire Station	78 - 103
To gain approval from the Policy and Resources Committee to proceed with a proposal to replace Worcester Fire Station.	
Glossary	

Minutes

Members present:

Mr K Taylor (Chairman),
Mr T Bean, Mr B Bullock, Mrs M Bunker, Mrs L Hodgson, Brigadier P Jones
CBE, Mrs J Potter, Mr D Prodger MBE, Mr D Taylor, Mr R Udall and Mr G
Yarranton (Vice-Chairman)

- | No | Item |
|----|---|
| 1. | Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Champion, Mrs L Eyre, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes and Mr C Smith. |
| 2. | Named Substitutes
None. |
| 3. | Declaration of Interests (if any)
Brigadier P Jones declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 as he is a Member of the Planning Committee for Hereford Council.
Mr G C Yarranton declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 as he is Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee at Wyre Forest District Council. |
| 4. | Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 7 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. |
| 5. | Budget Monitoring Report 2011-2012

The Treasurer introduced the Budget Monitoring Report 2011-2012 which informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2011-12 after 6 months. |

Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- The significant variance which had occurred due to the whole-time uniform and support pay underspends.
- Retained Duty System (RDS) pay which reflected the impact of amended national terms and conditions
- Unallocated budgets and the fact that from the unallocated £0.406m it had been agreed to vire £50,000 in accordance with financial regulations to improve resilience in the operations logistics function.

With regard to the Capital Budget this was divided into sections including vehicles, major buildings and minor schemes. Only £2.565m of £10.115m had been committed at this point in the year. It was noted that the allocations to the rebuilding of Malvern Fire Station would increase as the work was still ongoing but when the project was complete and the outcome was known there would be a possible transfer of budget from unallocated major buildings of no more than the approved budget. Members were advised that a full report on the Fire Control Project would be reported elsewhere on the agenda.

RESOLVED: *that the report be noted.*

6. Future Financial Prospects

The Treasurer presented a report which informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the initial review of future financial prospects.

Members were advised that in February 2011 the Fire and Rescue Authority agreed a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2010-11 to 2013-14. However since that approval had been given more information had been received in respect of grants and it was therefore appropriate to revisit the MTFP at this point.

Whilst information on grant allocation was not available (Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had released the grant control totals for Fire nationally and the year on year reductions will be minus 8.5% and minus 5% respectively. This had resulted in a change in the budget gap.

The Treasurer gave a presentation which outlined to Members the potential issues for the Authority if it were to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

Members were appraised that careful consideration needed to be given as to whether the Authority should accept the Council Tax Grant. Whilst Members were not being asked to make a decision at this point it was necessary to consider the long term impact of accepting or declining the Council Tax Grant. Members would receive a further presentation as information became available.

RESOLVED: *that the current revenue expenditure and resource projections be noted.*

7. Redundancy Policy

The Chief Fire Officer presented the revised redundancy policy to the Policy and Resources Committee for comment and guidance and recommendation to the full Authority.

Members were advised that the Policy followed ACAS good practice. There were two key changes to the Policy namely:

- Inclusion of the option for voluntary redundancy
- Pay protection for those staff redeployed into alternative roles from three years full pay to a sliding scale over a three year period.

Members raised the following queries:

- Whether the authority would lose key staff as part of the process. In clarification it was advised that Senior Management would ensure that

voluntary redundancies would be considered carefully.

- A Member queried what level the discretionary payment would be for those members of staff who were selected for compulsory redundancy. In response the Chief Fire Officer stated that the levels set by other organisations would be examined but that a the policy may be in force for many years it deliberately does not mention a level of enhancement as this would be dictated by the prevailing situation at the time.
- The procedure to be used for Firefighters was queried. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the content of this policy covered all employees.

RECOMMENDED to the full Authority for approval.

8. Fire Authority Plan 2011-2012 – 2nd Quarter Performance Analysis

The Head of Performance and Information presented a report which provided a summary of the 2nd Quarter performance against the Fire Authority Plan 2011-2012.

Areas where there had been improvement by reduction in incidents included the number of RTCs where the fire service attended, the percentage of dwelling fires where a smoke alarm had been fitted and the number of serious incidents attended on the roads in Worcestershire. Furthermore, areas where incidents had increased included the total number of fires attended, the number of secondary fires and the number of serious injuries on the roads in Hereford. It was also noted that the target for the percentage of people escaping unharmed from accidental dwelling fires had not been met.

The following areas of the report were highlighted:

- With regard to attendance standards, there had been a slight dip in the standard but the average time taken to attend incidents was 8 minutes 27 seconds and it was noted that the standard had been met in the last quarter. However it was considered that the Fire Control Project would contribute towards meeting this standard as there would be an automatic vehicle location system used to define which was the closest asset to attend the fire. Members were advised that in most cases where the standard was not met the vehicle had been just over 10 minutes in getting to the incident. Furthermore, the time it took to book in at the incident could also be a contributory factor.
- Staff sickness and absence levels had increased but Members were advised that it was important to consider this in context of the overall improvement in sickness following changes to the absence management policy and the introduction of return to work procedures. It was considered that the figures had been skewed by the number of staff on long term sickness and Service management were working hard to reduce this figure by bringing staff back to work as soon as possible.
- Chimney fires had increased as people sought alternative ways of heating their homes such as open fires and log burners. Steps were being taken to address this problem.
- With regard to deliberate fire setting Members were advised that in

Redditch where the numbers of such incidents were higher, the Service visited schools to work with the children. Patterns and trends were considered and work was in hand to reduce such incidents.

RESOLVED: *that the report be noted.*

9. Review of the Technical Fire Safety Department

The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a report which informed the Policy and Resources Committee on the progress of the Review of Technical Fire Safety as approved as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011/12.

Members were advised that the report had been compiled as part of the IRMP recommendations and the following points were highlighted:

- The review had considered the effectiveness of the Service's fire safety inspection arrangements and concluded that these were appropriate and fully compliant with legislative arrangements.
- An effective risk based inspection process was in place to audit the built environment in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
- The recommendations from a previous review in 2008/9 had been completed in full where appropriate and the anticipated benefits of these recommendations were being fully realised.
- That a process of annual review would be implemented to provide assurance of the fire safety department for the future.

The Group Commander for Community Risk and his Team were commended by the Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer for the work they had carried out on the review of the Technical Fire Safety Department.

Members asked a number of questions and the following clarifications were made:

- In response to concerns about fire doors being removed in premises such as student accommodation, Members were assured that officers worked with the University of Worcester and the Student Union to ensure that all aspects of fire safety were covered. Moreover further work was being completed with regard to the University's halls of residence.
- Work was also being done to cover local authority housing.
- A member queried whether the report would be circulated and it was clarified that the report would be published on the Authority's website as it was a public document.

RESOLVED: *that the report be noted.*

10. Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO) Model Publication Scheme Review

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report that sought the Authority's approval of the revised Publication Scheme in line with the Service's Governance arrangements.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the Publication Scheme was designed to impart as much information into the public domain. As a result of the publication scheme being available on the Authority's website it had resulted in a 50% reduction in the number of Freedom of Information requests received by the Authority.

RECOMMENDED to the full Authority for approval.

11. Equality and Diversity Steering Group Update

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report which informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the key areas of discussion at the Equality and Diversity Steering Group in November 2011.

RECOMMENDED to the full Authority for approval.

12. Joint Consultative Committee Update

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report that informed the Policy and Resources Committee about the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held during October 2011 and items that were currently under discussion and development were outlined. Members were advised that the Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer chaired the Joint Consultative Committee meetings and the new areas which had been brought to the Committee for discussion were drawn to Members' attention.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

14. Asset Management Strategy : Strategic Training Facilities (STF's)

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report that requested approval from the Policy and Resources Committee to proceed with three Strategic Training Facilities through to project completion. He outlined the different types of training scenarios that the facilities would provide and how they would improve the quality of training that Firefighters would receive.

RESOLVED:

- i) The progression through to completion of the three Strategic Training Facilities within the overall budget allocation as set out in the report be approved.***

ii) The use of a grant to enhance two Strategic Training Facilities to provide additional training facilities for the Service's USAR team and the use of a small Government grant to improve the Service's recruitment process be noted.

iii) The proposal for a fourth Strategic Training Facility be noted.

15. Business Continuity Planning

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report that updated Members on Business Continuity Planning arrangements and associated strategy. He advised Members that they had a key role to play and further assured Members that they would be kept fully briefed.

RESOLVED that:

i) The contents of the paper be noted.

ii) The use of Service assets and staff and associated strategy be considered further at the Authority meeting on 14 December 2012.

16. Fire Control Project Update

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report that updated the Policy and Resources Committee on the progress of the Fire Control Project.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee notes:

i) the full cost of the replacement Fire Control Project;

ii) the grant application to DCLG to cover the majority of the costs of the project;

iii) the alternative funding streams available to the Authority should the DCLG grant be wholly or partially unsuccessful; and

iv) that in the event of the DCLG grant being wholly or partially unsuccessful the Chief Fire Officer will bring a report to this Committee seeking agreement to utilise the alternative funding streams in (iii) above.

The meeting concluded at 12.51 pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairman

5. Budget 2012/13 and Review of Medium Term Financial Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To review the current position in relation to budgets for 2012/13 and beyond.
-

Recommendations

The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer recommend that the Committee:

- ***Determines whether to recommend to the FRA to take the council tax freeze grant in 2012/13 or a level of precept increase for 2012/13;***
- ***Agrees the budget assumptions to be recommended to the FRA;***
- ***Approves the recommendation to be made to the FRA of the consequential budget and precept requirements for 2012/13;***
- ***Recommends to the FRA the Precept policy for the Medium Term Financial Plan period; and***
- ***Notes the consequential budget gaps arising.***

Background

2. In February 2011 the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) agreed a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2010/11 to 2013/14.
3. The November 2011 meeting of this Committee and the December 2011 meeting of the FRA considered the impact of revised information on grants and cost projections, and more detail of the affect on the 2012/13 budget and precept.
4. Members have been made aware of the consequences of taking or not taking the Council Tax Freeze Grant and are now asked to make a recommendation to the FRA on this matter.
5. The Medium Term Financial Plan is always based on a set of assumptions about the future. Given the unprecedented degree of financial uncertainty the country now faces, and in order to provide more openness to our communities, more emphasis has been placed on the reasoning behind the assumptions now being made.
6. The assumptions for future years (2013/14 onwards) are slightly less critical, at this point, in terms of setting the budget for next year, but it should be noted that the timescales for making major changes to expenditure levels within the Fire and Rescue Service are significant, and therefore decisions taken now will have an impact for future budget setting processes.

Review of Available Resources

7. Appendix 1 shows the latest projection of future resources and can be split between formula grant and precept (based on the current MTFP).

Formula Grant

8. In December 2011 the government published a Bill to implement the changes proposed in the Local Government Resource Review. From 2013/14 this will have a fundamental impact on the way the FRA is funded with the removal of central government grant and its replacement by retention of a share of the Business Rate yield.
9. The full details of how this will work for Fire and Rescue Authorities is not known but government has indicated that no FRA will receive less money than it would have received under the grant assumptions under the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).
10. As has been indicated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) no FRA would have known its 2013/14 grant until Dec 2012 in any case, so as has been previously indicated the grant assumptions for 2013/14 and 2014/15 are based on the known national Fire grant control totals.

11. This itself provides a degree of risk as the grant changes experienced in 2011-12 and 2012-13 have varied significantly between individual FRAs as the table below illustrates. (Each additional 1% change is worth about £0.100m to H&WFRA).

	Overall Change	H&W Change	Range of Changes
2011-12	-6.7%	-2.4%	+0.3% to -9.5%
2012-13	-1.0%	+1.7%	+2.6% to -3.4%
2013-14	- 8.5%	?	?
2014-15	-5.0%	?	?

12. Furthermore, following the Chancellor's statement that there will be a further 2 years of public sector pay restraint (capped at 1%) government has announced that the previously indicated grant totals will reduce because the planning was based on a higher (but unspecified) assumption about pay awards.
13. To date the information is only available at total local government grant level and cannot be split to the Fire Service nationally. An estimate has been made assuming that the existing grant totals incorporated an assumption of pay awards at 2%.
14. Additionally the Chancellor also announced a further 2 years of "austerity" following the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period which was also the period of the current MTFP. In the absence of any other information and without knowing the outcome of paragraphs 8 to 10 above, an assumption of a further 5% cut in grant (based on the 2014/15 figure) following this CSR period has been assumed.
15. In summary the formula grant assumptions are:
 - An 8.5% cut in 2013-14 – with an adjustment for reduced pay awards.
 - A 5.0% cut in 2014-15 – with an adjustment for reduced pay awards.
 - A further 5.0% cut in 2015-16.

Precept Assumptions

16. The precept assumptions can be sub-divided into those relating to the tax-base and those relating to the Band D level of tax and any changes to it.
17. As with formula grant, proposed changes to Local Government Resourcing, particularly regarding the localisation of Council Tax Benefit and the implications on precepting authorities, will have an as yet un-quantified impact on precept levels.
18. The Authority's MTFP has always taken a cautious approach to assumptions about future increases in the tax base. Although the average increase over the last 7 years has been 0.7% no increase has been forecast for planning purposes. In the light of the uncertainty referred to in paragraph 17 above, this assumption is continued for future years.
19. In respect of 2012/13, 4 of the 7 Billing Authorities have already notified tax-base increases averaging 0.6%. It is not possible to accurately predict the figures for the other 3 Billing Authorities although final figures will be known by the time of the FRA meeting.
20. Additionally each year there is a potential net surplus or deficit on the Billing Authorities Collection Funds. In the past this has ranged from a total of £0.013m to £0.107m (being £0.031m in 2011/12) but has never been budgeted for as there are significant variations both surplus and deficit from individual authorities and it would be imprudent to fund core expenditure from this source.
21. The Billing Authorities reporting to date are likely to declare no balances (although the final figures will be known for the FRA meeting in February), and this figure is likely to be significantly affected by the changes in paragraph 17 above.
22. In Feb 2011 the FRA approved a planning assumption of an annual increase in precept of 3.45% for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.
23. The figure is below the level (4.0%) that would require the FRA to conduct a referendum on the level of increase and therefore the risk of capping (or similar) is eliminated.
24. The consequences of the offered Council Tax Freeze Grant are dealt with in paragraphs 26-30 below.
25. In summary the formula grant assumptions are:
 - Tax-base increase of 0.25% for 2012-13 (subject to final figures).
 - No tax-base change thereafter.
 - No Collection Fund surpluses or deficits (2012-13 subject to final figures).
 - Annual increase of 3.45% in the Band D precept.

Council Tax Freeze Grant

26. For a further year government has offered a grant to any FRA which freezes council tax for 2012/13. The grant is equivalent to 3.0% of Council Tax, but unlike the 2011-12 grant it is payable for one year only.
27. The financial consequences of taking the grant are that there would be a bigger resource gap in 2013-14 than would otherwise be the case.
28. Attention is drawn to the fact that the 2011-12 Freeze Grant is only payable until 2014-15 and so in the additional MTFP year, i.e. 2015-16 this no longer appears.
29. Funding resources available assuming the grants were taken are shown in Appendix 2, and funding resources under the two options are summarised below:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Available Resources	(32.110)	(31.894)	(32.101)	(32.443)
Available Resources (with Freeze grant)	(31.392)	(31.151)	(31.333)	(31.648)

30. It should be noted that for the purposes of Council Tax setting, the Freeze Grants are required to be shown as income netting off from expenditure rather than as funding, this means that, if taken, the £0.627m freeze grant will show as a reduction in the expenditure requirement rather than an increase in available resources.

Expenditure Requirement

31. The expenditure requirement has continued to be refined and the key assumptions around pay, inflation and interest rates are outlined in the paragraphs below.
32. Previous iterations of the budget requirement have used an average 2% or 3% figure for general inflation. In November 2011, as part of the collection of data for the Firefighters Pension Top Up Grant, CLG provided the Treasury planning assumptions for Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation for the CSR period. In the short term, particularly, these seem to more closely represent the reality of current experience, and the short term figure has been used for 2012/13.
33. In addition it has been thought prudent to include an additional inflation provision for 3 key areas of expenditure that are projected to individually increase well above the average CPI/Retail Price Index (RPI) level. Two of these areas are utilities (gas and electricity) and diesel fuel.
34. The third area of additional inflation provision is around business rates. Although the annual increase is capped at RPI by legislation, there is also an impact of changes to rateable which means that the net increase will be greater than the RPI %.
35. Although the Chancellor has made clear the government's policy on public sector pay increases (a 2 year pay freeze followed by 2 years at a maximum of 1%), it is not entirely clear how this will translate to the fire sector as:

- Pay awards are negotiated independently of central government.
- The local government sector had already had a pay freeze in the year before the Chancellor's 2 year pay freeze.

36. Whilst the provision for 2013-14 and 2014-15 has been held at the 1% guideline, it has been considered prudent to provide a provision for 2012-13 above the 0% level, although clearly if there is no pay award the resultant saving will flow through to close the future budget gaps.

37. For 2014/15 a higher figure has been provided to reflect that after 2 years of pay freeze and 2 years at 1% there may be pressure for a significantly higher award so a provision of 2% in 2014/15 and 3% in 2015/16 is made at this stage.

38. The relevant assumptions are summarised below in tabular form for ease of reference:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
General Inflation	4.30%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Utilities - Gas	15.00%	15.00%	10.00%	5.00%
Utilities - Electricity	10.00%	10.00%	7.50%	5.00%
Diesel Fuel	10.00%	10.00%	7.50%	5.00%
Business Rates	7.50%	5.00%	3.50%	3.00%
Pay Awards	1.00%	1.00%	2.00%	3.00%
Long Term Interest	3.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%

39. The consequential budget requirement projections are shown in detail in Appendices 3 and 4. The net budget requirement is summarised below:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Appendix 3 Budget Req. - without Freeze Grant	32.324	32.773	33.756	35.752
Appendix 4 Budget Req. - with Freeze Grant	31.697	32.773	33.756	35.752

Budget Gap

40. The forecast budget requirement and projected available resources based on the assumptions outlined at paragraphs 15, 25 and 38 above, give a cumulative budget gap as indicated below:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget Requirement	32.324	32.773	33.756	35.752
Available Resources	(32.110)	(31.894)	(32.101)	(32.443)
Budget Gap	0.214	0.879	1.655	3.309

41. If the 2012-13 Council Tax Freeze Grant were to be taken, as referred to in paragraphs 26 to 30 above, the budget gap in 2012-13 is marginally greater, but is significantly greater thereafter. This is summarised overleaf:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget Requirement	31.697	32.773	33.756	35.752
Available Resources (with Freeze Grant)	(31.392)	(31.151)	(31.333)	(31.648)
Budget Gap	0.305	1.622	2.423	4.104
Impact of taking Freeze Grant	0.091	0.743	0.768	0.795

42. It is clear that the financial consequences of taking the Freeze grant in 2012-13 are likely to be significantly disadvantageous in the medium term.

Closing the Budget Gap

43. The Senior Management Board and other officers have been scrutinising budgets in detail throughout 2010-11 and 2011-12, and will continue to do so.
44. Restructuring plans, involving potential redundancies amongst support staff, are currently in consultation but it is expected that these may deliver savings which will cover the budget gap in 2012/13.
45. Plans are in progress to close the gap outlined at paragraph 40 above for the current CSR period.

General Reserves

46. The level of general reserves shown in the Statement of Accounts at 31 March 2011 reflects the accounting arrangements for the provision created in the Accounts in 2009/10. As this matter is now resolved reserves will be adjusted during 2011/12.
47. The table below shows the projected position in the general reserve in relation to the revenue budget requirement over the MTFP period. The budget requirement is based on the limiting factor of available resources (assuming no take up of the 2012/13 Council tax freeze grant).

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Reserves balance at 1st April	0.934	1.396	1.396	1.396	1.396
Adjustment in 2011/12	0.462				
Balance at 31st March	1.396	1.396	1.396	1.396	1.396
Budget Requirement	31.195	32.110	31.894	32.101	32.443
% of Budget Requirement	4.5%	4.3%	4.4%	4.3%	4.3%

48. These figures are slightly higher than the 3.7% to 3.8% position in the current MTFP reflecting the additions to balances in 2010-11 as a result of prudent budget management.

49. Whilst this level of balances remains prudent, especially with the significant uncertainty over grants, pay awards, inflation and future funding arrangements etc; there is an opportunity cost of holding reserves. They could be used to finance one off expenditure or to temporarily reduce the Council Tax precept. The risk, of course, is that if reserves are reduced there is less capacity to meet unforeseen or unexpected expenditure pressures.

Future Progress

50. Officers will continue to refine the budget figures and provide final tax-base and collection fund figures.
51. The FRA will meet on 15 February 2012 (10.30am) to agree a budget and precept for 2012-13.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	Whole report

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

52. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Yes	Whole report
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	Yes	Whole report
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Resource Projection

Appendix 2: Resource Projection – with Tax Freeze Grant

Appendix 3: Expenditure Requirement

Appendix 4: Expenditure Requirement - with Freeze Grant

Background Papers

None

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Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority**P&R Committee : 25th January 2012****Resource Forecast**

	2011/12 Budget £m	2012/13 Forecast £m	2013/14 Forecast £m	2014/15 Forecast £m	2015/16 Forecast £m
Formula Grant					
<i>assumption</i>		1.7%	-8.5%	-5.0%	-5.0%
Actual	(10.407)	(10.584)			
Assumption - based on Fire Grant Totals			(9.684)	(9.200)	
Estimated Adjustment for Pay Limits			0.059	0.136	
Estimated					(8.611)
	(10.407)	(10.584)	(9.625)	(9.064)	(8.611)
Council Tax Precept					
<i>tax-base assumptions</i>		0.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<i>precept increase assumptions</i>		3.45%	3.45%	3.45%	3.45%
Actual	(20.757)				
Estimated		(21.526)	(22.269)	(23.037)	(23.832)
Net Collection Fund Surpluses	(0.031)				
	(20.788)	(21.526)	(22.269)	(23.037)	(23.832)
TOTAL RESOURCES	(31.195)	(32.110)	(31.894)	(32.101)	(32.443)

year on year change in available resources		2.9%	-0.7%	0.6%	1.1%
%of resource funded by grant	33.4%	33.0%	30.2%	28.2%	26.5%

Tax-base	281,860.94	282,565.59	282,565.59	282,565.59	282,565.59
Band D Equivalent	£ 73.64	£ 76.18	£ 78.81	£ 81.53	£ 84.34
Annual Change in Band D		£ 2.54	£ 2.63	£ 2.72	£ 2.81

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority**P&R Committee : 25th January 2012****Resource Forecast**

	2011/12 Budget £m	2012/13 Forecast £m	2013/14 Forecast £m	2014/15 Forecast £m	2015/16 Forecast £m
Formula Grant					
<i>assumption</i>		1.7%	-8.5%	-5.0%	-5.0%
Actual	(10.407)	(10.584)			
Assumption - based on Fire Grant Totals			(9.684)	(9.200)	
Estimated Adjustment for Pay Limits			0.059	0.136	
Estimated					(8.611)
	(10.407)	(10.584)	(9.625)	(9.064)	(8.611)
Council Tax Precept					
<i>tax-base assumptions</i>		0.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<i>precept increase assumptions</i>		0.00%	3.45%	3.45%	3.45%
Actual	(20.757)				
Estimated		(20.808)	(21.526)	(22.269)	(23.037)
Net Collection Fund Surpluses	(0.031)				
	(20.788)	(20.808)	(21.526)	(22.269)	(23.037)
TOTAL RESOURCES	(31.195)	(31.392)	(31.151)	(31.333)	(31.648)

year on year change in available resources		0.6%	-0.8%	0.6%	1.0%
%of resource funded by grant	33.4%	33.7%	30.9%	28.9%	27.2%

Tax-base	281,860.94	282,565.59	282,565.59	282,565.59	282,565.59
Band D Equivalent	£ 73.64	£ 73.64	£ 76.18	£ 78.81	£ 81.53
Annual Change in Band D		£ -	£ 2.54	£ 2.63	£ 2.72

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority**P&R Committee : 25th January 2012****Expenditure Requirement Forecast**

	2012/13 Forecast £m	2013/14 Forecast £m	2014/15 Forecast £m	2015/16 Forecast £m
2011/12 Net Budget Requirement	31.195	31.195	31.195	31.195
Less one-off 2011/12 & 2012/13 Public Holiday		(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
	31.195	31.175	31.175	31.175
<u>Cost Pressures</u>				
Contingency for Pay Awards	0.180	0.407	0.821	1.477
General Inflation Contingency	0.362	0.657	0.956	1.218
LGPS - Increased Contribution Rate	0.020	0.040	0.060	0.080
	0.562	1.104	1.837	2.775
<u>Capital Programme</u>				
Impact of Asset Management Plan & Fleet Strategy	0.229	0.479	0.729	0.979
	0.229	0.479	0.729	0.979
<u>Funding issues</u>				
Firelink - ending of Special Grant				0.289
2011/12 Council Tax Freeze Grant				0.519
2012/13 Council Tax Freeze Grant				
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.808
<u>Other Issues</u>				
Cessation of Commercial Training	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Operational Equipment	0.150			
Property Maintenance	0.125			
Control Resilience Project - running costs	0.061	0.013	0.013	0.013
RDS - Settlement of Part-time working issues	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Firefighter pensions - drift to new scheme	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)
	0.338	0.015	0.015	0.015
BUDGET REQUIREMENT PROJECTION	32.324	32.773	33.756	35.752

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

P&R Committee : 25th January 2012

Expenditure Requirement Forecast

Taking 2012/13 Council Tax Freeze Grant

	2012/13 Forecast £m	2013/14 Forecast £m	2014/15 Forecast £m	2015/16 Forecast £m
2011/12 Net Budget Requirement	31.195	31.195	31.195	31.195
Less one-off 2011/12 & 2012/13 Public Holiday		(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
	31.195	31.175	31.175	31.175
<u>Cost Pressures</u>				
Contingency for Pay Awards	0.180	0.407	0.821	1.477
General Inflation Contingency	0.362	0.657	0.956	1.218
LGPS - Increased Contribution Rate	0.020	0.040	0.060	0.080
	0.562	1.104	1.837	2.775
<u>Capital Programme</u>				
Impact of Asset Management Plan & Fleet Strategy	0.229	0.479	0.729	0.979
	0.229	0.479	0.729	0.979
<u>Funding issues</u>				
Firelink - ending of Special Grant				0.289
2011/12 Council Tax Freeze Grant				0.519
2012/13 Council Tax Freeze Grant	(0.627)			
	(0.627)	0.000	0.000	0.808
<u>Other Issues</u>				
Cessation of Commercial Training	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Operational Equipment	0.150			
Property Maintenance	0.125			
Control Resilience Project - running costs	0.061	0.013	0.013	0.013
RDS - Settlement of Part-time working issues	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Firefighter pensions - drift to new scheme	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)
	0.338	0.015	0.015	0.015
BUDGET REQUIREMENT PROJECTION	31.697	32.773	33.756	35.752

6. West Midlands Contractor Framework

Purpose of report

1. To inform Members of the formation of the West Midlands Contractor Framework and the Authority's involvement in the consequent Partnering Agreement involving Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police and The Fire and Rescue Authority and seek approval of the use of Standing Order 5.1.f in awarding contracts under the framework .

Recommendation

The Clerk recommends that Members note the content of the report and approve the use of Standing Order 5.1.f. in awarding contracts under the framework agreement.

Background

2. Members will be aware of the continuing trend for public authorities to work together to drive down the cost of procurement. This usually happens through the use of framework agreements. A framework agreement involves the public authorities, usually through a single lead authority (in this case Worcestershire County Council) going out to the market through a European procurement process for a particular type of works, services or goods. Before going to the market each authority estimates the likely spend it will incur under the contract. Bidders submit prices for a range of quantifiable elements specified for the contract type.
3. This has a number of advantages for both the public authorities and contractors. Public authorities, particularly smaller authorities get better value tenders because of the scale of the framework agreement , there is a reduction in both the cost and time taken in tendering as authorities are not required to go through an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) tendering process for each individual contract. Instead they can then contract direct with one of the winning bidders knowing they are compliant with EU procurement regulations. It is attractive for potential bidders as they know they will be bidding for a sizeable piece of work and are therefore more likely to put in a competitively attractive bid.
4. The West Midlands Contractor Framework came into operation in September 2010 and it is estimated by Worcestershire County Council that it will overall deliver up to £180 million of work over four years. It is to be used for projects over £1million in value, but this threshold will be reviewed during the Framework period.
5. Three contractors have been awarded a place on the Framework - Kier Moss, Cheltenham, Speller Metcalfe Malvern Ltd, and Thomas Vale Construction of Stourport - following an OJEU advertised tendering process. With the three contractors all having demonstrated in the selection process capability,

experience, strong personnel and good environmental attitudes, as well as good value. Contracts are awarded on a rotational basis on most occasions rather than by competition. In return the contractors are expected to share knowledge with each other as well as with the client organisations. They are also required to provide and maintain good performance. The success (or failure) of process and delivery is monitored, and poor performance will cause contractors to miss allocations. Acceptability thresholds will be increased year on year to encourage enhanced performance, and regular shared training and learning sessions will be held to pursue improvement by both contractors and client organisations.

6. In the standard procedure the public authority wishing to use the framework will contract directly with one of the contractors. A contractor is appointed under an NEC Professional Services Contract (PSC) to join the design team for the project, and awarded a Construction Contract only if and when a firm price and programme have been agreed. This early involvement enhances the buildability of designs, allow the contribution of key supply chain members and other specialists, and increase cost planning and programming reliability. To ensure value for money, targets for improvement upon client budgets have been set, and successful delivery will be rewarded. Construction contracts will also use the NEC format (option A). Individual contracts will be between the client authority and the allocated contractor. Variations to the standard procedure are available to accommodate, for example, unusual projects, design and build procurement, or the engagement of the contractor only for the construction stage. However, these are for exceptional use only, as the full benefits of extensive and early contractor collaboration will be obtained by using the standard allocation and procurement systems.
7. The Framework governance and management structure comprises a Board, both containing representatives of the client partners and all three contractors.

Fire Authority Standing Orders

8. The Fire Authority contract standing orders provides that for contracts over £100,000 three tenders must be sought .As mentioned earlier the framework agreement works on that basis that projects are allocated on a rotational basis and does not envisage running mini competitions between the three contractors.
9. Exemptions from tendering contained in the standing orders already enable this to happen.
10. Standing Order 5.1 provides that a tendering exercise need not be undertaken
 - (f) Where the contract is awarded through a Consortium of which the Fire Authority is a member or which the Chief Fire Officer has resolved to use, bearing in mind the need to be satisfied that the contract(s) is properly awarded and good value obtained.

11. Whilst your statutory officers are comfortable that the use of such an exemption would be appropriate when contracting under the framework agreement, it was felt as use of this framework agreement would be considered as part of the Property Strategy on a relatively frequent basis, it would be more transparent for this matter to be brought to Members' attention and agreement that use of such an exemption is appropriate.

Conclusion

12. Members note the report and agree to the use of Standing Order 5.1.f.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	y	Throughout

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	Y	Throughout

Additional Considerations

13. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	N	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	N	
Risk Management/Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	N	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	N	

Contact Officer

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7. Retaining Staff with Specialist Skills

Purpose of report

1. To bring to the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee issues relating to potential skills gaps in the Service as a result of the potential changes to pension provisions and to seek agreement to a policy that mitigates the potential for this to happen.
-

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the contents of this report are noted and the Policy and Resources Committee agree to the Service adopting the attached policy (Appendix 1) relating to the retirement and re-employment of personnel.

Introduction and Background

2. The Service is currently in the position whereby 15 members of uniformed staff are eligible to retire from the Service and receive their full pension entitlement. These include staff who have acquired specialist skills which have taken a number of years to develop.
3. Whilst the Service is continuing to train and develop employees to mitigate against the loss of key skills due to retirement, it has proved difficult to recruit to some specialist uniformed posts and there is inevitably a skills gap that is not sustainable for effective service delivery. These specialist posts are key to the success of the Service in delivering its statutory Fire and Rescue obligations. A prime example is within the Technical Fire Safety Department where it takes a minimum of two years to become a qualified Fire safety Officer and perhaps five years to be considered experienced.
4. The Service anticipates a real risk of losing staff with specialist skills, knowledge and experience, due to members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme exercising their right to take retirement at the earliest opportunity, ahead of any potential changes to the pension scheme that may impact on benefits. The Service has already seen a number of staff retire before their otherwise intended retirement date citing the potential pension changes and fear of unknown changes to come as the reason.
5. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (H&WFRS) has discretionary powers to allow those employees in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS), the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) who wish to retire, commute their lump sum and be re-employed, to do so. Personnel must retire in order to access pension benefits.

Potential Impact of Pension Changes

6. There is currently a degree of uncertainty for members of the FPS, contributions are due to rise in April 2012 and over the subsequent two years, and the Government has recently consulted (April 2011) on a number of changes to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes for England.
7. This consultation sought views on the key proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes that could impact on available benefits, including:
 - Changes to the indexation of additional pension benefits (to the Consumer Prices Index).
 - Changes to the definition of pensionable pay (may exclude inclusion of Flexible Duty Allowances which is paid to all Station, Group and Area Commanders).
 - Commutation – discretion to permit the maximum payment (may be additional tax implication for some members).
 - Withdrawal of pension whilst employed by a Fire and Rescue Authority (abatement to be applied to a member re-employed in any role by any authority).
8. The above consultation did not deal with the recommendations of the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission (Lord Hutton's report). This will be the subject of a separate, further consultation.

Abatement

9. Where a retired firefighter is subsequently re-employed, if the Authority responsible for paying the member's pension does not abate the pension, the costs of the pension fall on the Authority. The Authority may therefore choose to abate the pension to the point where the aggregate of the pension in payment and the salary received on re-employment does not exceed the level of earnings directly prior to retirement. This means that the individual may not receive a pension payment for the duration of their re-employment.

Cost Implications

10. Adopting an abatement policy would potentially save and/or reduce the potential for the Authority to pay £19 – 20k per employee, per annum, were a Station/Group Commander to be re-employed and therefore it can be seen that the adoption of this policy has the potential to assist in retaining specialist staff whilst making savings.

Conclusion/Summary

11. It is proposed that in order to retain key skills, the Service adopts a policy whereby staff are able to retire, in order to access pension benefits including a lump sum, and subsequently be re-employed, with the pension being subject to abatement.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	No	

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

12. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	No	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	Once approved will commence consultation.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Proposed Policy

Background papers – FPSC 10/2009 – Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 1992 – Abatement of Pension on the Re-employment of a Firefighter

Contact Officer

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Flexible Retirement Policy

- 1 Information
- 2 Local Government Pension Scheme Policy
 - 2.1 Background
 - 2.2 LGPS – Policy Statement
 - 2.3 LGPS – Application Procedure
 - 2.4 LGPS – Pension Implications
- 3 Firefighters Pension Scheme and New Firefighters Pensions
 - 3.1 Background
 - 3.2 Firefighters Pension Scheme – Pensionable Age
 - 3.3 New Firefighters Pension Scheme – Pensionable Age
 - 3.4 Firefighters (and New Firefighters) Pension Scheme – Applying for Flexible Retirement and Re-employment
- Appendix A Firefighters Pension Scheme Guidance Note 1/2010
- Appendix B Firefighters Pension Scheme Examples

1. Information

- 1.1 The Government encourages and supports employers in offering opportunities for flexible working. In addition, the Government has recognised that it is in the interests of both employers and pension schemes if employees can have early access to their retirement benefits but still be available to work.
- 1.2 This approach has a twofold benefit, the first is to the employer in that they no longer pay pension contributions but retain the skills and experience of an employee. The second is to the employee who can have access to their retirement benefits but also continue in employment.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all staff in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), the Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS) and the New Firefighters Pension Scheme (NFPS). Due to pension scheme rules the policy for Local Government Pension Scheme and the policy for both Firefighters Pension Schemes are dealt with separately within the policy.

2. Local Government Pension Scheme Policy

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Regulations, introduced in late 2005, require each Authority to publish and keep up to date a policy statement on Flexible Retirement. (This Authority's Statement is published on the Human Resources Department's SharePoint site). The regulations allow an employee who is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme aged 55 or over, to reduce their hours of work or grade to elect to take their retirement benefits early whilst still continuing in employment and continuing their Fund membership, provided the employer agrees.
- 2.1.2 Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service recognises that there are advantages of flexible retirement to both the employee and the Authority. The Authority can benefit from retaining the skills of experienced employees allowing better succession planning, whilst the employee can move into retirement more gradually.

2.2 LGPS - Policy Statement

- 2.2.1 The Authority will consider applications made under this Regulation having regard to the particular circumstances surrounding each case. **It should be understood that the Authority will not grant flexible retirement other than in cases where the financial implications can be justified or in other exceptional circumstances.** Decisions will be made on the individual merits of each case taking into consideration: -

- The operating requirements of the department employing them and the impact on service delivery
- The Authority's ability to meet the cost of granting such a request (the nearer to 55 an employee the higher the costs will be for the Authority)
- Whether any demonstrable cost savings can be made in excess of potential savings available under any severance arrangements in place
- The member's personal circumstances

2.2.2 Applications for the payment of unreduced benefits in these circumstances will only be granted if: -

- In the Authority's sole opinion, there are special compassionate and extenuating circumstances surrounding the application and that these, along with the supporting evidence provided, justify approval and
- The Authority can meet the cost of granting such a request.

2.3 2.3 LGPS - Application Procedure

2.3.1 If an employee, who is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme, wishes to apply for flexible retirement they must put their request in writing to their line manager with a copy to the Head of Human Resources at least 3 months before the date they wish to take flexible retirement stating:

- a. The date of flexible retirement
- b. That they wish to reduce either their hours of work or their grade and the details of the request e.g. number of hours to be reduced to and pattern of work. If the employee wishes to reduce their grade they must understand that this would only be accepted should it meet the business needs of the Service and there would be a change and evaluation of the job description to reflect any reduced responsibilities

2.3.2 The Head of Human Resources will discuss the implications of the request with the line manager and the respective Head of Department and if it is a viable and cost effective option, will obtain a financial quotation of the cost implications. If there is a cost to the Authority in granting the request then the respective Head of Department will have to demonstrate to the Director of Finance and Assets and the Head of Human Resources how this cost will be met before the request is signed off.

- 2.3.3 Normally within 4 weeks of submitting the request, the employee along with a Trade Union representative or work colleague will be invited to a meeting with the line manager to discuss the request further. Should there be problems in accommodating the initial request the meeting will provide an opportunity to consider alternative solutions.
- 2.3.4 After further discussion with the respective Head of Department and the Head of Human Resources, the line manager will confirm in writing to the employee, normally within 2 weeks of the meeting, whether or not their application for flexible retirement has been successful.
- 2.3.5 In the case of requests for flexible retirement from members of the Senior Management Board the decision to grant the request will be taken by the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.3.6 If the application is not approved the employee will have the right of appeal. The grounds for the appeal must be put in writing to the Head of Human Resources Manager within 7 days of receiving the decision, who will arrange for the appeal will be heard by a manager with no previous involvement in the decision. The outcome of the appeal is the final level of appeal.

2.4 LGPS - Pension Implications

- 2.4.1 Employees are strongly advised to seek independent financial advice on how flexible retirement will affect their pension entitlement. The Authority will not provide any such advice to employees. Employees may request an estimate of pension benefits before requesting flexible retirement by contacting the Pensions Manager at Worcestershire County Council directly on 01905 766511.
- 2.4.2 Employees who take flexible retirement will get immediate access to the pension they have accrued up to the date of commencing flexible retirement, which will be on a reduced basis below the age of 65. The employee's pension may be abated or suspended if the combined pay and pension exceeds the employee's full time salary on taking flexible retirement.
- 2.4.3 Employees will continue to pay into the Local Government Pension Scheme once they take flexible retirement unless they choose to opt out. Provided they do not opt out employees will build up another period of membership within the Scheme, albeit on a reduced basis.

3. Firefighters Pension Scheme and New Firefighters Pensions Scheme Policy

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Section 3 applies to members of the Firefighters Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters Pension Scheme. The term 'firefighter' is used for all operational roles throughout section 3.
- 3.1.2 The aim of this policy is to provide information to employees contemplating retirement so they may consider whether they wish to continue working, withdraw their lump sum and have their pension abated.

Note: Opportunities to be re-employed will be limited to posts where the Service has a defined need.

- 3.1.3 On 6 April 2006, the Government relaxed the rules on pension commutation whilst continuing in employment. As a result Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority has elected to exercise the discretion allowed within these provisions and will enable employees in the Firefighters Pension Scheme/New Firefighters Pensions Scheme ((N)FPS) to retire from the scheme, commute their lump sum pension and be re-employed.
- 3.1.4 It is important to note that the rules of both the FPS and NFPS have not been amended and it is still the case that employees must retire in order to commute their pension benefits. The pension scheme rules do not prevent immediate re-employment following the retirement, however, to meet with the taxation issues surrounding the 'Protected Pension Age', see appendix A, which affects members of the Firefighters Pensions Scheme only, the Authority requires employees to have a minimum break in service of 1 month. It should be noted that the Authority does not and will not provide advice on taxation issues to employees.
- 3.1.5 Subject to any future changes to the (N)FPS or to the Government's tax provisions firefighters are allowed to retire from their current job, receive a commuted lump sum pension benefit (if they wish) and be re-employed, providing the (N)FPS criteria for retirement is met.
- 3.1.6 Firefighters who are re-employed following retirement are subject to the Abatement Rule (K4) as set out in the FPS, Consolidated Order 1992 (Revised December 2006), Page 47. This states:
- 'The fire and rescue authority by whom a pension is payable may, in their discretion, withdraw the whole or any part of the pension, except a pension under part C (awards on death - spouses and civil partners), for any period during which the person is entitled to it is employed as a regular firefighter by any fire and rescue authority.'*
- 3.1.7 Under this rule, firefighters who are re-employed following retirement cannot receive annual remuneration plus annual pension in excess of the remuneration received immediately prior to retirement. Therefore, pension will not be payable in addition to salary. If the firefighter elects to apply for a post with reduced salary a proportion of the pension may be paid subject to the maximum level of previous salary.
- 3.1.8 The annual pension will be payable when employment in the Fire Service ends.
- 3.1.9 It is crucial that firefighters familiarise themselves with the potential implications of abating their pension, including the impact upon any future application for ill health retirement and the effect upon death in service entitlement. The Pensions Manager at Worcestershire County Council will be able to provide information on these matters.

3.2 Firefighters Pension Scheme - Pensionable Age

- 3.2.1 Firefighters **should** request advice from the Pensions Manager at Worcestershire County Council who is able to provide accurate information on retirement dates and pension figures. In the FPS the normal pension age is 55 and the minimum 50, provided that the individual is able to reckon at least 25 years' pensionable service.
- 3.2.2 Firefighters may retire from the age of 50, having completed at least 30 years pensionable service, with the option to commute up to 25% of their annual pension in favour of a one-off lump sum.
- 3.2.3 Firefighters aged over 50 but under 55, with at least 25 years but less than 30 years pensionable service, may retire with the option to commute up to 2.25 x their annual pension into a lump sum.

3.3 New Firefighters Pension Scheme - Pensionable Age

- 3.3.1 Firefighters **should** request advice from the Pensions Manager at Worcestershire County Council who is able to provide accurate advice on retirement dates and pension figures. In the NFPS the minimum pension age is 55 with a normal pension age of 60.
- 3.3.2 Firefighters may retire from the age of 60, with the option to take a 'commuted portion' which is limited to one quarter of the pension entitlement. You would receive £12 as a lump sum for each £1 of pension that you commute.
- 3.3.3 Firefighters aged over 55 may retire with the appropriate actuarial reduction; the reduction is currently 5% for each year up to 65 of the deferred pension age.

3.4 Firefighters (and New Firefighters) Pension Scheme - Applying for Flexible Retirement and Re-employment

- 3.4.1 It is important to stress that it would be advantageous to discuss any request as early as possible before the proposed retirement date, however, a decision with regard to the request will normally be given within 8 weeks of the request being made. The following policy sets out the criteria for reengagement. **It should, however, be clearly understood that the granting of requests for reengagement will be the exception rather than the rule.**
- 3.4.2 There are two options:-
- Fire Authority offer re-engagement as an option to fill specific post(s) where there is a shortage of skills/experience within the remaining workforce.
 - Firefighters make a generic application when approaching retirement.

- 3.4.3 Where the Authority has defined a specific need a business case must be produced by the relevant Head of Department (Chief Fire Officer in case of Principal Officer) showing that there are clear benefits for the Authority to offer a re-employment opportunity. Part of this business case will include whether to offer the post out to open competition.
- 3.4.4 Applicants are required to make a written application to retire and be re-engaged to Head of Human Resources. Where there is more than one applicant a short list and selection process, relevant to the specific requirements post, will take place.
- 3.4.5 In the case of a generic application, the firefighter must submit a written application to retire and be re-engaged' to Head of Human Resources, at least 3 months before his/her retirement date. The relevant Head of Department will consider the application and submit it to the relevant Principal Officer for consideration (the Chief Fire Officer for Principal Officers). The decision, whether to re-engage or not on generic applications, is at the complete discretion of the Principal Officer/Chief Fire Officer, there is no right of appeal.
- 3.4.6 The Head of Department concerned will consider these requests for retirement and re-engagement producing a business case for consideration by either their Principal Officer, up to and including Group Commander, or the Chief Fire Officer for Area Commander and Principal Officers. The following will be taken into account: -
- Clear financial benefit to the Authority
 - Staffing requirements of the Authority, in particular any shortage of specialisms
 - Transitional requirements of organisational restructuring
 - The fitness and health of the Firefighter
 - The absence record of the Firefighter
 - The disciplinary record of the Firefighter
 - The skills of the Firefighter
 - Need and suitability for filling the post part-time or flexible working, including ability to maintain competency
 - Resilience of staffing options
 - Whether having due regard to the above, the Head of Department would wish to meet any staffing need through an open recruitment process (for which the Firefighter wishing to be retired and re-engaged could also apply)
 - Length of fixed term contract to be offered
- 3.4.7 Where Firefighters are re-engaged following retirement, then the following will apply:-
- All re-engagements will be on a fixed term basis.

- Firefighters will be re-engaged at the same rates of pay as other firefighters of the Authority employed at the role re-engaged.
 - The Fire and Rescue Authority, in considering its discretion as to abatement of on-going pension payments, treat each case on its merit and having regard to CLG's guidance. That the firefighter's on-going pension payments will be abated where they are re-engaged in the role of a regular Firefighter on the principle that the annual rate of pay on re-engagement, plus the annual rate of pension payable under the FPS should not exceed the annual rate of pay they received in the firefighting role immediately prior to retirement.
- 3.4.8 Firefighters who are employed at a higher role than Firefighter may apply for re-engagement at that role or any lower graded role. The same criteria will be applied to these applications as detailed above.
- 3.4.9 Firefighters may also apply for re-engagement at the same or lower graded role on reduced hours or flexible hours or for a fixed term when the criteria above will apply to such applications. In addition the Director may decide that an offer of re-engagement is only made on the basis of reduced or flexible hours.
- 3.4.10 If the request is approved the individual will first have to resign/retire from their current position before being re-engaged and will be required to have a break in service of 1 month and rejoin on conditions applicable to new recruits.

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Firefighters Pension Scheme Guidance Note 1/20

Protected Pension Age – Implications for Re-employment of FPS Pensioners from 6th April 2010.

Under the Finance Act 2004, the Minimum Pension Age (MPA) rises to age 55 from 6th April 2010. Members of the Firefighter's Pension Scheme 1992 have a right to retire from age 50 (provided they have 25 or more years of pensionable service). This right to retire at an age below 55 is protected¹ and on retirement members will receive a Protected Pension Age (PPA).

HM Revenue and Customs have taken the view that protection does not extend to Chief Fire Officers appointed on or before 5th April 2006.

The purpose of this guidance note is to bring to the attention of Fire and Rescue Authorities the tax rules that will apply from 6th April 2010 where an individual who has taken pension benefits from the FPS takes up employment again. We are aware that some FRAs re-employ firefighters after retirement and this guidance note will therefore be of particular interest to those considering the employment of firefighters who retired with a PPA on, or after, 6th April 2010.

From 6th April 2010, an individual who retires with a PPA and who subsequently takes up employment will lose that protection if they are employed by one of the following employers and one of the four employment conditions listed below is not met.

- An employer who employed the individual in the six months before benefit entitlement arose, and who was also a **sponsoring employer** in the scheme under which benefit entitlement arose in that six month period.
- Any person connected with the employer described in the previous bullet point. Note that under this condition the person employing the individual does not need to be a sponsoring employer.
- Any sponsoring employer in the pension scheme under which benefit entitlement arose that is connected with the individual.

Our interpretation of a "sponsoring employer" in connection with the FPS is the relevant employing authority, whether a fire and rescue authority or county council.

¹ Under the Registered Pension Schemes (Prescribed Schemes and Occupations) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005 No. 3451).

Therefore, from 6th April 2010 an individual who has retired with a PPA and is subsequently re-employed by a FRA before they have reached age 55 will incur additional tax charges on all pension benefits, including any commuted lump sum, paid to them before reaching age 55 unless one of the following four re-employment conditions is met:

1. recall by the Armed Forces
2. a break in employment of at least six months
3. a break in employment of at least one month and benefits may be abated
4. a break in employment of at least one month and the re-employment is materially different

With regard to re-employment condition 3, we are advised by HMRC that the abatement condition is satisfied provided that the employer has the discretion to abate. Whether abatement is actually applied is not material. Under Rule K4 of the FPS, a FRA has the discretion to abate where a person entitled to a pension is employed as a regular firefighter.

With regard to re-employment condition 4, the legislation is silent on the definition of “materially different” and HMRC advise that the normal meaning should be applied.

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Firefighters Pension Scheme Examples

Example 1

A Firefighter in the FPS aged 53 with 30 years' experience wishes to receive their pension but carry on in work. They have a good attendance and discipline record and they have a skill (eg USAR or ERDT) which is in short supply so the Authority would continue to benefit from their services. The Service agrees to allow them to retire and be re-engaged as a Firefighter. They receive their lump sum pension payment, and salary only as a Firefighter following re-engagement. The figures would be: -

	<i>On retirement and re-employment</i>	<i>When finally leaving employment</i>
<i>Previous Salary</i>	<i>£28,199</i>	<i>£0</i>
<i>Salary</i>	<i>£28,199</i>	<i>£0</i>
<i>Lump Sum</i>	<i>£96,675</i>	<i>£0 (already taken)</i>
<i>Pension</i>	<i>£0 (abated)</i>	<i>£14,100</i>

Their ongoing pension payments are abated whilst they continue in employment as a Firefighter but, on retirement from their re-engaged post, revert to full entitlement. They also choose to opt in to the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme in respect of their re-engaged position.

Example 2

A Crew Commander in the FPS aged 55 wishes to carry on working after 55, but with less responsibility and reduced working hours. The Authority has a vacancy for 50% of a Firefighter position at a station that cannot be immediately filled. The Crew Commander has a good attendance and discipline record, and a good level of skill and experience. The Authority agrees for the Crew Commander to retire from their current role, and re-engages him/her as a Firefighter on based on 50% of a full time firefighter. The Crew Commander receives his/her pension lump sum, the salary payable for a Firefighter and their on-going pension payments.

	<i>On retirement and re-employment</i>	<i>When finally leaving employment</i>
<i>Previous Salary</i>	£31,263	£0
<i>Salary</i>	£18,188	£0
<i>Lump Sum</i>	£110,463	£0 (already taken)
<i>Pension</i>	£13,075 (abated by £2,556)	£15,631

As the total of pension payments and Firefighter salary exceed their previous pay as a Crew Commander, so the abatement of pension is limited to that above their previous gross pay, in this case £2,556.

8. Updates to Work Programme 2011/12

Purpose of report

1. To consider and amend as appropriate the Work Programme of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Recommendation

The Clerk recommends that the Policy and Resources Committee approves the Work Programme as amended for 2011/12.

Introduction and Background

2. At the FRA meeting on 28 September 2010 the Authority agreed a new Committee structure which incorporated the new Policy and Resources Committee to replace the previous Budget Committee and Best Value Policy and Performance (BVPP) Committee to ensure a more integrated approach between finance and policy.
3. At the same Authority meeting in September 2010 it was agreed that Members “*approve the work programme for each Committee.*”
4. At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 8 June 2011, Members considered and agreed a draft work programme for 2011/2012. It was also agreed that any future changes to the work programme would be brought to the Committee for approval.
5. Whilst it had not been intended that the work programme should be prescriptive, it was envisaged that there would be an element of flexibility so that additional items can be included as issues arise throughout the year. It was further agreed that any future changes to the work programme would be brought to the Committee for approval.

Main Changes to the Policy and Resources Committee Work Programme

6. The main changes that have been made to the Committee’s work programme have been highlighted in Appendix 1 attached

Conclusion/Summary

7. The Work Programme for the remainder of the calendar year is attached to afford an opportunity for Members to have an input into the planned work of the Committee.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	No	

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

8. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	No	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Revised Work Programme for Policy and Resources Committee

Background papers:

Report to FRA 28.09.10 Review of Committee Structure
 Report to Policy and Resources 8 June 2011 – Policy and
 Resources Committee Work Programme 2011/2012

Contact Officer

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Policy and Resources Committee Work Programme 2011/12

Meeting	Item	Purpose of Item	Refer item to FRA
7 March 2012, 10.30am, SHQ	Draft Authority Plan 2012/13 Budget Monitoring Property and Assets Update re Hereford Station IRMP 2011/12 Update – Fire Cover Fleet Programme Updates from the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and Diversity Steering Group • Joint Consultative Council • Health and Safety Liaison Panel 	To consider for recommendation to FRA To note To consider outcome of review To note	Yes
Meeting	Item	Purpose of Item	Refer item to FRA
7 June 2012	Authority Plan 2011/12 Fourth Quarter Performance and Annual Performance Analysis Provisional Financial Results 2011/12 Work Programme 2012/13	To note To note To approve	

9. Budget Monitoring 2011-12

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2011-12.
-

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer recommend the report be noted.

Introduction and Background

2. This is a routine review of the position on Revenue and Capital budgets, and follows on from the review cycle undertaken by the Service's Senior Management Board. The report represents the position after 9 months.

Revenue Budget

3. In February 2011 the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) set a net revenue budget requirement for 2011-12 of **£31.195m** made up as below:

	£m
Net Expenditure on Services	32.859
Special Grants	(1.145)
Council Tax Freeze Grant	(0.519)
	<hr/>
	31.195

4. This budget was initially allocated to budget heads and amended as detailed in the September report to this Committee. The details are shown in Appendix 1.
5. Appendix 1 shows details of the budget and expenditure to date and a projection of the year end position. At this point in the year the significant variations are:
 - Wholetime Uniform and Support pay: are showing projected underspends due to a careful management of vacancies in light of the expected future grant cuts. The impact of changes to the pension scheme on the retirement pattern is unknown, but continues to be monitored.
 - RDS pay: this reflects the impact of the amended national terms and conditions (relating to sick pay and bank holiday leave) following settlement of the part-time working tribunal, and the fact that there is an increasing take up of the pension scheme by RDS staff.

- Unallocated budgets: Of the original £0.406m Officers have agreed to vire budget (with agreement of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer under Financial Regulations) to improve resilience in the Operational Logistics function (fleet and operational equipment). The anticipated cost of this in 2011-12 is now only £0.050m but the full year costs are £0.150m
- Facilities Management: During 2011/12 it has emerged that the County Council has been supplying heat and hot water to the Bromsgrove Fire Station since 1997/98 for which no payments had been made. There is a backdated cost of payments which should have been made over the 15 year period. This figure has been negotiated between officers of the Service and Worcestershire County Council.
- Operational Logistics: Additional costs incurred as part of the response to a Health and Safety alert in respect of Breathing Apparatus.
- Capital Financing: Re-profiling of major schemes (see below) has resulted in in-year savings.

6. At this point a net underspending of £0.586m is forecast.

Capital Programme

7. The Capital Programme is divided into 2 parts:

- The **Capital Strategy**: representing the level of capital expenditure for which revenue budget for capital financing costs has been provided within the revenue budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- The **Capital Budget**: that part of the Strategy for which the FRA has given specific approval to spend, i.e. there are allocations for major building works, but no expenditure is permitted until the Committee has approved the individual schemes.

8. The budget is also divided into 3 blocks:

- Vehicle Replacement
- Major Buildings
- Minor Schemes – for which, by custom and practice, responsibility for allocation has been delegated to the Service's Senior Management Board.

9. The Capital Strategy is made up as follows:

		£m
2010-11 Strategy	<i>FRA - Feb 2011</i>	4.420
Re-phasing from 2010-11		4.895
Fire Control Project		2.350
Training Facilities	<i>Grant Funded</i>	0.276
		11.941

10. In respect of the Capital Strategy, £8.288m has been allocated to the Capital Budget, of which £4.126m relates to allocations for major building schemes. (see paragraph 13 below) leaving a balance of £4.162m on other schemes.
11. Of this, £1.751m has been spent and a further £1.447m committed by way of order or contract. These figures represent 42% and 35% respectively of the capital budget excluding major schemes.
12. Members' attention is drawn to 3 specific areas
13. Major buildings: FRA approval has been given to allocate a budget to the re-building of Malvern Fire Station and 3 of the 4 Strategic Training Facilities and these projects are now proceeding. At this stage negotiations are still on-going (under the framework agreement) regarding the construction contracts. It is considered prudent not to show this figure in a public document until these negotiations are complete in case it prejudices the outcome. When this is completed there will be a transfer of budget to the relevant schemes.
14. Fire Control: The budget has now been updated to take account of the revised project costs approved by this Committee in November 2011. The expenditure is expected to be funded by DCLG grant.
15. Vehicles: There are two aspects to report here.
 - For the 3rd year in succession 10 year leases on Fire Appliances acquired under the capital control regime prior to 2004/05 have expired. Once again it has proved more cost effective to purchase the appliances rather than to extend the lease for the remaining 5 years of the appliance life. Revenue costs of this additional borrowing are offset by the saving in provision within the leasing budget.
 - The cost of replacement pumps has exceeded the budget due to increased prices. The additional revenue financing costs of the current year increase can be met by adjustments within the 2012/13 programme, and the consequences of the price increases on the future programme are now included in the 2012/13 budget and MTFP projections.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	Whole report considers financial position

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

16. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Yes	Paragraph 6
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 : 2011-12 Revenue Budget Monitoring

Appendix 2 : 2011-12 Capital Budget Monitoring

Contact Officer

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Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

Policy & Resources Committee

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2011/12 : TO END OF :

Dec 2011

Scheme	Budget £000	Actual £000	Commitments £000	Total £000	Remaining £000
Vehicles					
086 - Ex Leased Appliances	-	131,700	-	131,700	- 131,700
091 - Pinzgauer Routine Replacement 4WD	52,000	-	45,759	45,759	6,241
092 - Argocat Routine Replacement Off Road	26,000	-	22,258	22,258	3,742
105 - Routine Pump Replacement 2011/12	820,000	520,520	339,320	859,840	- 39,840
115 - Replacement 4 x 4 2011 - 2012	73,848	-	-	-	73,848
116 - Line Rescue Vehicle Fit Out	28,000	-	-	-	28,000
Totals	999,848	652,220	407,337	1,059,557	(59,709)
Major Building					
Other Allocated Schemes - commercially confidential	4,125,700	3,997	700	4,697	4,121,003
012 - IRMP Pebworth	74,630	8,085	50,307	58,392	16,238
Totals	4,200,330	12,082	51,007	63,089	4,137,241
Minor Schemes - Property					
023 - Legionella Engineering Works	9,235	2,420	-	2,420	6,815
054 - Motorised Bay Doors	22,000	21,450	-	21,450	550
068 - Evesham Flat Roof	640	-	-	-	640
069 - Stourport Flat Roof	550	-	-	-	550
072 - Ewyas Harold Resurface Yard	2,241	-	-	-	2,241
083 - SRT Storage	71,160	63,640	-	63,640	7,520
084 - RPE Cylinder Strategy	59,606	37,014	15,491	52,505	7,101
095 - Diversity Compliant Rest Facilities Kidderminster - Hereford	58,880	-	-	-	58,880
096 - Property Work From Health and Safety Audit	36,646	35,902	-	35,902	744
097 - Air Conditioning ICT Work	2,606	-	-	-	2,606
100 - Evesham Refurbishment	8,779	718	-	718	8,061
110 - Upgrade to Lifts to Comply with Legislation	25,000	20,098	385	20,484	4,516
112 - Fire Extinguisher Replacements	12,000	12,010	103	12,113	- 113
113 - Replacement Windows	81,600	41,331	40,269	81,600	0
119 - Evesham House Refurbishment	25,000	21,090	3,353	24,443	557
Totals	415,943	255,673	59,602	315,275	100,668
Minor Schemes - IT					
004 - Comp Systems Computer Purchases	37,673	25,622	249	25,871	11,802
005 - Comp Systems Computer Software	6,964	5,448	-	5,448	1,516
034 - Developments	4,281	1,041	2,300	3,341	940
063 - PBX Digital Telephony	10,283	7,839	1,927	9,766	517
074 - Command and Control Assurance	19,000	11,720	9,580	21,300	- 2,300
076 - HQ Network Infrastructure Enhancements	62	-	-	-	62
106 - Business Continuity (ITC)	30,000	5,378	-	5,378	24,622
107 - Citrix Farm Updates	15,000	-	-	-	15,000
109 - Network Quality of Service Enablement	23,000	11,941	244	12,185	10,815
Totals	146,263	68,989	14,300	83,289	62,974
Minor Schemes - Equip					
078 - Respiratory Protective Equipment	11,082	-	120	120	10,962
102 - Water Rescue PPE	25,000	33,659	-	33,659	- 8,659
118 - BA Enhancements	40,000	4,158	26,680	30,839	9,161
Totals	76,082	37,818	26,800	64,618	11,464
Minor Schemes - Other					
001 - IT VDMS	20,011	-	17,894	17,894	2,117
051 - Human Resource Information System	14,304	1,749	-	1,749	12,555
093 - CFRMIS 5 Web based package	3,550	2,700	850	3,550	0
101 - Intel Application	13,700	-	-	-	13,700
103 - Fire Control Replacement	2,350,100	678,521	864,493	1,543,015	807,085
114 - Finance System Budgeting Module	40,812	40,812	-	40,812	0
123 - Transfer Crawling Rig From Betony Road To Redditch	7,000	145	5,343	5,488	1,512
Totals	2,449,477	723,927	888,581	1,612,508	836,969
Total Minor Schemes	3,087,765	1,086,407	989,282	2,075,689	1,012,076
Capital Budget	8,287,943	1,750,709	1,447,627	3,198,336	5,089,607
Not yet Allocated					
998 - IRMP Unallocated	3,333,956	-	-	-	3,333,956
999 - Unallocated	319,619	-	-	-	319,619
	3,653,575	0	0	0	3,653,575
Capital Strategy	11,941,518	1,750,709	1,447,627	3,198,336	8,743,182

10. Fees and Charges

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on progress in implementing the Fire and Rescue Authority's decision on charging.
-

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Background

2. In December 2010 the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) considered a report on fees and charges and agreed a policy of charging for lift rescues and assistance to the Environment agency.
3. Following a detailed period of consultation with potentially affected parties, the lift rescue charging regime was fully implemented from July 2011.
4. This report provides Members with an update on the position to the end of December 2011.

Lift Rescues

5. The December paper was based on information relating to lift rescues for the period April 2009 to March 2010 and indicated that there were around 90 of which 30 would be chargeable under the adopted regime.
6. Looking at the period from July – December 2009 (to match the period in 2011 when charges have been levied) there were 52 rescues of which 18 would have been chargeable, although the corresponding figures for 2010 were only 41 and 14 respectively.
7. There were only 33 rescues in the same period of 2011 of which 10 were charged for.
8. Although there has been an overall reduction in the number of rescues in the short reporting period the proportion that is chargeable has remained broadly consistent.
9. As part of the review of fees and charges the level to be charged was examined in relation to actual costs and other services and this has resulted in a charge that is higher than was estimated in the December 2011 FRA paper, with the result that income levels are broadly where expected:
 - July – December: expected 15 rescues at £148 = £2,220
 - July – December: actual 10 rescues at £238 = £2,380
10. To date there have been no reported problems with invoice payment.

Other Charges

11. The policy to charge for assistance to the Environment Agency was implemented immediately with the result that a significant charge was made towards the end of 2010/11 (£12,600).
12. The nature of such incidents is such that they are relatively infrequent and to date there has only been one further chargeable incident of £4,700.
13. As a consequence of the review of fee levels referred to in paragraph 9 above, the level of income from charges for Fire Reports (generally to Insurance companies) have increased by a factor of 10, although this is less than £3,000 in total.

Conclusion

14. The policy is generating the small amount of income that was forecast in the December FRA report.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	Whole report

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

15. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	N	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	N	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	N	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	N	

Supporting Information

None

Background Papers

None

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11. IRMP 2011/12 Update - Review of the Provision of Operational Training and Development

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcomes of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011/12 Objective No. 6, the Review of Operational Training and Development.
-

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report is noted.

Introduction and Background

2. As part of the IRMP process, the 2011/12 annual action plan set out priorities for that financial year.
3. Objective 6 of that plan states;

Provision of Operational Training and Development

“During 2011/12 we will consider our current operational training strategy and provision to identify any potential for improvement in both effectiveness and efficiency, and implement any appropriate changes.”

4. Between April 2011 and November 2011, a comprehensive internal review of operational training was undertaken. The review evaluated the effectiveness of existing training arrangements and identified areas for improvement where appropriate. As a result, 72 specific recommendations were put forward for consideration by the Senior Management Board (SMB) and subsequently accepted in December 2011. Firefighter safety was of primary importance to the review as this has been agreed as one of the top priorities for the Service by SMB. The review was informed by both locally determined training and development requirements and also national guidance and reports, which have made various recommendations for consideration by each Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) when determining their approach to training.
5. The Review examined five distinct areas of training provision including:
 1. Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation
 2. Competence Recording Systems (Training Records)
 3. Current training provision
 4. Existing training facilities
 5. Staffing and structure of Training and Development

6. The Review specifically incorporated outcomes from the Internal Audit into the HSE Consolidation report (January 2011) which outlined a number of areas where improvements could be made to training and development to further enhance Firefighter safety whilst carrying out their operational duties.
7. It also incorporated the learning outcomes from a number of high profile incidents the outcomes of which require the FRS to reflect on their own arrangements for ensuring employees are well trained and competent.
8. The Review has considered the functions of the Training and Development Centre (TDC) and the Approved Centre, as both these departments actively contribute towards training provision and the professional development of staff.
9. In line with the Chief Fire Officer's delegated responsibilities a number of recommendations have already been presented to the Service's Senior Management Board (SMB) for consideration and a final decision, as not to have done so would have unnecessarily delayed obvious areas for improvement. Examples include changes to Breathing Apparatus (BA) training, promotion processes, competency assessment and also the streamlining of training administration.
10. Where emerging outcomes have required early FRA engagement, these have been progressed through the Policy and Resources Committee. One key outcome which has been progressed in this manner has been the resource allocation for Strategic Training Facilities.

Review Outcome

11. As a result of the IRMP Review of Operational Training, a comprehensive three part report was considered by SMB in December 2011 and approved in full for implementation. The report identifies 72 specific recommendations which are designed to fundamentally change the way in which the Service delivers operational training in the future. The report provides a detailed and comprehensive evaluation of training provision within the Service. It has identified changes which will improve operational training, firefighter safety and provide necessary assurance for training provision for the future. (See Appendix 1).
12. Additionally, a key feature of the report is the requirement that a regular ongoing review of training effectiveness will occur as an annual process.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	Part One Section 9 (Appendix 1)

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

13. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	No	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	Complete	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – IRMP Recommendation 6 Report, Provision of Operational Training and Development (2011) Part 1

Background papers – IRMP Recommendation 6 Report, Provision of Operational Training and Development (2011) Parts 2 and 3

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PART ONE

Executive Summary

As a result of a comprehensive review of operational training provision within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) this report proposes 72 specific recommendations which have been designed to fundamentally change the way in which the Service delivers the operational training and development of its employees. In broad terms it challenges existing practices with regard to organisational structure, training facilities and methods of training delivery.

The review has been broken down into six specific sections in order to ensure that a systematic approach has been taken in all areas. The six sections are detailed below:

1. Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation (Section 4)
2. Individual Development Records/Competence Recording Systems (Section 5)
3. Current training provision (Section 6)
4. Existing training facilities (Section 7)
5. Staffing and structure of Training & Development (Section 8)
6. Budget (Section 9)

Each section has been subject to analysis of the current arrangements in place, comparison with national guidance and identification of possible areas for improvement.

The following paragraphs provide a summary of findings for each of the six sections and also the recommendations put forward for consideration by Senior Management Board (SMB). A more detailed summary of each section can be found in Sections 4 – 9 of this report.

Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation

There is currently no clear training strategy or framework document which details the Service's approach to training and development. This situation leaves the organisation vulnerable with regard to effective planning, performance monitoring and compliance with national guidance. It creates uncertainty as employees are unaware of the Service's strategic aims and objectives in this area.

This situation has been outlined during other recent internal audits of the training function, where difficulty in identifying performance against a clear strategy has been identified. Clear strategic direction and the provision of accessible supporting information is essential for the Service to confidently deliver its statutory responsibilities, whilst utilising its training resource to provide employees with an efficient and effective training function.

This review recommends that this situation should be addressed as a matter of priority, via the production of a formal strategy and supporting training framework document, which should be made available to all employees via the Service's intranet. It should, in essence, provide a central location for employees to access information relating to all areas of training and development, the rationale behind training programmes and the Service's expectations.

The specific areas for development are as follows:

- Strategy Document
- Framework Document
- Workforce Development Strategy
- Competency Training Record
- Firefighter Development Process
- Promotion Processes
- Promotion Workbooks

Individual Development Records (IDR)/Competency Recording Systems

The review has included a comprehensive examination of the current IDR which forms the very basis on which all operational training is planned and delivered. Historically the Service has taken a “broad brush” approach to routine training in the operational environment as it expects all operational staff to train in all areas of the operational role, irrespective of their local risk profile or duty system. This approach has been problematic as many employees have had difficulty discharging this requirement and maintaining such an extensive skills set, much of which can be deemed unnecessary when viewed on a risk assessed basis.

The review has identified that the current IDR system can no longer be considered to be “fit for purpose” and an alternative programme should now be developed. A new and revised IDR should be location specific, based on the local risk profile. It should also include safety critical elements and reflect Station specific specialist equipment. Such an approach will provide safer, more confident operational staff and ensure occupational competence.

The Service has already procured and installed Redkite, a web based training recording programme, which can be developed further to deliver a new location specific IDR. It should also take into account the different requirements of both Firefighters and Officers alike. This report proposes a fundamental change to the existing IDR system and coupled with improvements to technical training platforms; it should provide a robust and user friendly recording system.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) have formed the basis of initial Firefighter Development since 1997. Whilst the NVQ has maintained a standard of competence through external quality assurance for the Service, it has proven to be problematic to deliver. The level of expertise required to deliver the qualification coupled with administrative bureaucracy has meant the NVQ itself has been generally unpopular with employees. The review proposes a move away from the NVQ process to an internally accredited Firefighter Development Programme which is centrally delivered and still meets the requirements of external quality assurance.

The Service has been required to facilitate national promotion and development processes since 1996. The review, however, has identified that the expectations of central government has recently changed in this area and the Service is now free to design and operate processes which it feels are more appropriate and acceptable to employees and managers alike. National processes have been very unpopular with employees and a number of restrictions within these processes have also caused significant frustration for managers involved with promotion and development. The review therefore has

recommended a move away from the national process to one which is more user friendly to both participants and administrators of the process. A new five stage process including exercises set in a Fire Service context has been developed and proposed to Senior Management Board (SMB).

Current Training Provision

Effective training provision is key to providing a robust and competent workforce and is particularly important within an operational context. Historically, the Service has utilised a wide variety of methods to deliver training including the use of Lead Instructors based at the Training and Development Centre (TDC), use of Station/Departmental based Instructors and external training providers. The purpose of this review is to ensure that this provision is still appropriate and cost effective.

The review has identified that the Service can achieve greater efficiencies within its training resource by adopting a more centrally controlled approach. This new approach, coupled with a robust training plan should maximise the effectiveness of training delivery.

Existing Training Facilities

Currently training facilities vary significantly from Station to Station as investment to date has been limited and therefore some Stations lack the very basic amenities required to carry out routine core skills training. As a result of this, Crews have been forced to rely on central training facilities and specialist training facilities from other organisations, such as the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service. This is evident in safety critical areas such as carbonaceous Breathing Apparatus training. This situation has led to a significant amount of valuable training time being lost travelling to and from venues and could compromise operational cover and incur significant cost to the Service.

In order to address this situation the review has identified the need for the Service to provide its own Strategic Training Facilities (STFs) and underpinning STF strategy. This strategy includes detailed building specifications incorporated within the Service's Capital Asset Programme. These facilities should be strategically located so that all operational staff can access them to discharge both the routine elements of their IDR but also the specialist safety critical elements such as BA training. With this in mind it is suggested that STFs should be provided at the following locations:

- Evesham
- Kidderminster (enhance existing facility)
- Kingsland
- South Herefordshire (site yet to be identified)

Due to this recommendation being crucial to the delivery of the wider recommendations detailed within this report, SMB have already commenced this proposal.

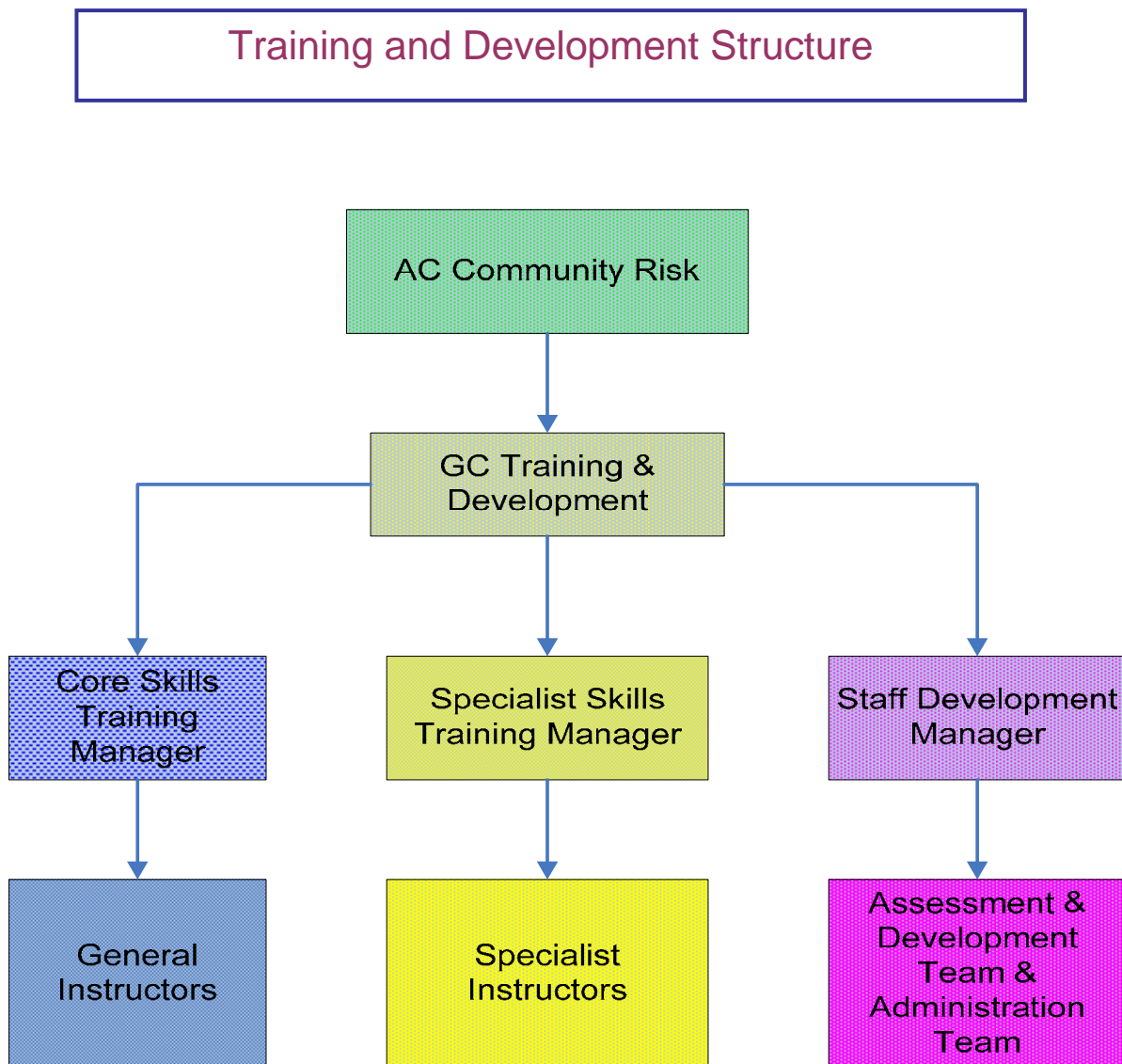
The review has also identified that the existing TDC has outgrown its current site and can no longer address the training requirements of the Service going forward. It is recommended that the Service seek an alternative venue for its TDC at the earliest opportunity. Any new site will need to afford the TDC the space and facilities it requires to deliver the outcomes of this review.

Staffing and Structure of Training and Development

The current TDC structure has been in place for the last three years and no longer represents the most effective way to deliver the training function. To support the findings of this review it is recommended that the Service consider a full restructure of the TDC team including the merging of both TDC and Approved Centre to ensure the efficient and effective running of the department going forward.

A streamlining of training provision will realise significant cost savings. By reallocating administrative tasks currently carried out by Instructors to the administrative team, Instructors should maximise their capacity to deliver training, carry out assessments and quality assure activities.

The proposed new TDC structure is detailed below:



Budget

The TDC budget currently stands at £636,000 per annum with a Training Budget Reserve of £30,000. Despite the proposed changes, this amount will still support the increased levels of training delivery now and in the immediate future.

The review has identified some areas requiring significant investment but also some areas that will provide year on year savings.

Investment

- Building of four STFs to support training Delivery: **£2 million**
- Relocate Training and Development Centre: **Cost to be identified**

Potential Savings

- Amalgamation of Approved Centre and Training Centre and the move away from NVQ: **£143K year on year**
- Reduction of 1 Instructor from TDC: **£35K**

Summary of Recommendations

Table 1 below provides a summary of the headline recommendations for each of the sections covered by the review. The table is colour coded to indicate the status of each recommendation. The table also identifies indicative implementation dates where appropriate and the year in which each objective is to be delivered. Immediate actions relate to April 2011 to March 2012, longer term actions relates to April 2012 to March 2014.

Key

Fully Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
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Table 1

Recommendations	Implementation Status	Priorities
Strategy, guidance and supporting documentation (Section 4)		
Produce strategy and framework document		High
Produce training information notes on all operational subjects.		High
Produce a performance dashboard to collate information on refresher programmes	BA complete	High
Produce Workforce development Strategy		High
Design New Firefighter development programme to replace NVQ	Implement April 1st 2012	High

Design new promotion process to accommodate Firefighter to AC	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Design promotion workbooks for Firefighter to Area Commander	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Individual Development Records, Recording and Competency Systems (Section 5)		
Adopt Redkite as the platform for recording training		High
Review existing Individual Development Record identifying safety critical elements and location specific elements		High
Create new Competency Training Record risk mapped to each Station/Location for all roles	Implement April 1st	High
Current Training Provision (Section 6)		
Initiate a rolling 2 year Operational Training Refresher programme for all Operational Personnel	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Produce a booking system that will be a mirror image for each operational training refresher programme	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Produce a training refresher programme that involves Independent Assessment and Q A process.	Implement April 1st 2012	High
Implement IC refresher programmes for level 1 to level 4 commanders		High
Produce Incident ground safety programme for Station based staff	Implement April 1st 2012	Medium
Cessation of Commercial Training	Implement April 1st 2012	Medium
Deliver free fire safety training courses that help businesses comply with fire safety law.	Longer term objective	low
Consolidate all Driver training requirements in to one department (Driving school)	Longer term objective	Medium
Existing facilities (Section 7)		
Build four STFs, to satisfy Services training requirements	Longer term objective	High
Instructors to utilise Facilities to conduct refresher programmes/ routine training.	Longer term objective	High
Relocate Training Centre to a more suitable location	Longer term objective	Low
Staffing and Structure of Training & Development (Section 8)		
Create a new training and Development Department team structure		High
Disestablish posts in accordance with the Firefighter development programme proposal		High
Adopt revised meeting structure		High

12. IRMP 2011/12 Update - Review of the Community Safety Department

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcomes of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011/12 Objective No. 2, the Review of the Community Safety Department.
-

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report is noted.

Introduction and Background

2. As part of the IRMP process, the 2011/12 annual action plan set out priorities for that financial year.
3. Objective 2 of that plan states;

Allocation of Community Safety Resources

“We will review the allocation of our Community Safety resources to ensure best fit of activities to risk. This will maximise our ability to reduce risk in our communities”

4. Prevention activity is a statutory obligation for the Service under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004. National guidance confirms that prevention is at the heart of each Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and each FRS has the autonomy to conduct community safety work as they see fit. However, each FRS must ensure that their prevention activities are based on a targeted approach to reducing the risks identified within the Service area.
5. The purpose of the IRMP review was to evaluate relevant data and information, sourced both locally and nationally, in order to determine the impact and effectiveness of the work currently carried out by the Community Safety Department and how best to allocate resources in the future, in recognition of an ever changing risk profile.

6. The following analysis was conducted:
 1. A review of National Guidance.
 2. A review of the Service's Community Safety activities and current resource deployment.
 3. Summary of existing and predicted demographical information.
 4. Summary of known "at risk" groups and order of priority ranking.
 5. A profile of operational activity.
7. The above information was analysed in order to provide an up to date and accurate community risk profile for the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It is anticipated that this profile will be utilised, both now and in the future, to accurately predict specific communities and households which present the highest risk of accidental fire and other hazards. This revised approach will ensure that the Service is always "evidence led" in its community safety activities in future, therefore ensuring the best possible use of valuable resources and delivery of high quality prevention services to local communities.
8. In line with the Chief Fire Officer's delegated responsibilities a number of recommendations have already been presented to the Service's Senior Management Board (SMB) for consideration and a final decision, as not to have done so would have unnecessarily delayed obvious areas for improvement. Examples include: the procurement of Pinpoint risk identification software, targeted approach to schools' education and the review of the Community Safety Administration.

Community Safety Department Overview

9. The Service hosts its own Community Safety Department, based at Service Headquarters in Worcester, and delivers safety activities across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
10. The department's structure is based on previous priorities and past projects and has evolved over a number of years.

Review Outcome

11. As a result of the IRMP Review of Community Safety, a comprehensive three part report was considered by SMB in December 2011 and approved in full for implementation (see Appendix 1). The report identifies 48 specific recommendations which are designed to fundamentally change the way in which the Service delivers Community Safety in the future. The report has identified that all community safety work should be "evidence led" and that the following areas of work should, in future, be the Service's main focus in order to reduce risk in the community:
 - Accidental Dwelling Fires
 - Road Safety
 - Arson Reduction
 - Elderly and Vulnerable People

12. Implementation of the report's recommendations will ensure best use of the resources the Service has available to target a reduction of risk to the community. It will also realise savings of approximately £280,000 year on year achieved through changes to both the staffing of the department and reductions to the non-pay budget.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	Section 1.37 (Appendix 1)

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

13. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Yes	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	Yes	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	Complete	

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – IRMP Recommendation 2 Report, Community Safety Review, Part 1

Background Papers - IRMP Recommendation 2 Report, Community Safety Review,
Parts 2 and 3

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As a result of a comprehensive review of the Community Safety Department, its prevention activities and resource deployment within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS), this report proposes forty eight specific recommendations which have been designed to fundamentally change the way in which the Service delivers its community safety activities in the future.
- 1.2 Fundamentally the Service will move to an evidence led, risk targeted approach to community safety making the best use of the resources it has available.
- 1.3 The changes proposed in this report are essential if the Service is to ensure that it delivers high quality prevention activities. In broad terms it challenges existing practices with regard to community risk priorities, departmental structure, resources and methods of delivery.
- 1.4 The review is designed to re-focus the activities of both the Community Safety Department, based at Service Headquarters in Worcester, as well as the activities of operational personnel based on the three Districts.
- 1.5 The review has been broken down into six key areas in order to ensure that a systematic approach has been taken in all areas. The six sections are detailed below:
 1. Community Safety Strategy
 2. Community Safety Departmental Structure
 3. Community Safety Manager's Role
 4. Community Safety Methods of Delivery
 5. Conclusions
 6. Recommendations
- 1.6 Each section has been subject to analysis of the current arrangements in place, comparison with national guidance and identification of possible areas for improvement.
- 1.7 The following paragraphs provide a summary of findings for each of the six sections and also the recommendations put forward for consideration by the Senior Management Board (SMB).

Community Safety Strategy

- 1.8 The review has identified that whilst the Service does have a Community Safety Strategy in the form of the "How To" guide, this document does not appear to be based on sound evidence or detailed demographic data, rather it appears to reflect a blend of local and national perceived priorities. The document is not widely understood by those staff responsible for its delivery and as a result many of the intervention activities currently taking place do not clearly align with the document. Also, the Service does not appear to have in

place a clear framework for delivery of the strategy with clear lines of responsibility and ownership for related key performance indicators.

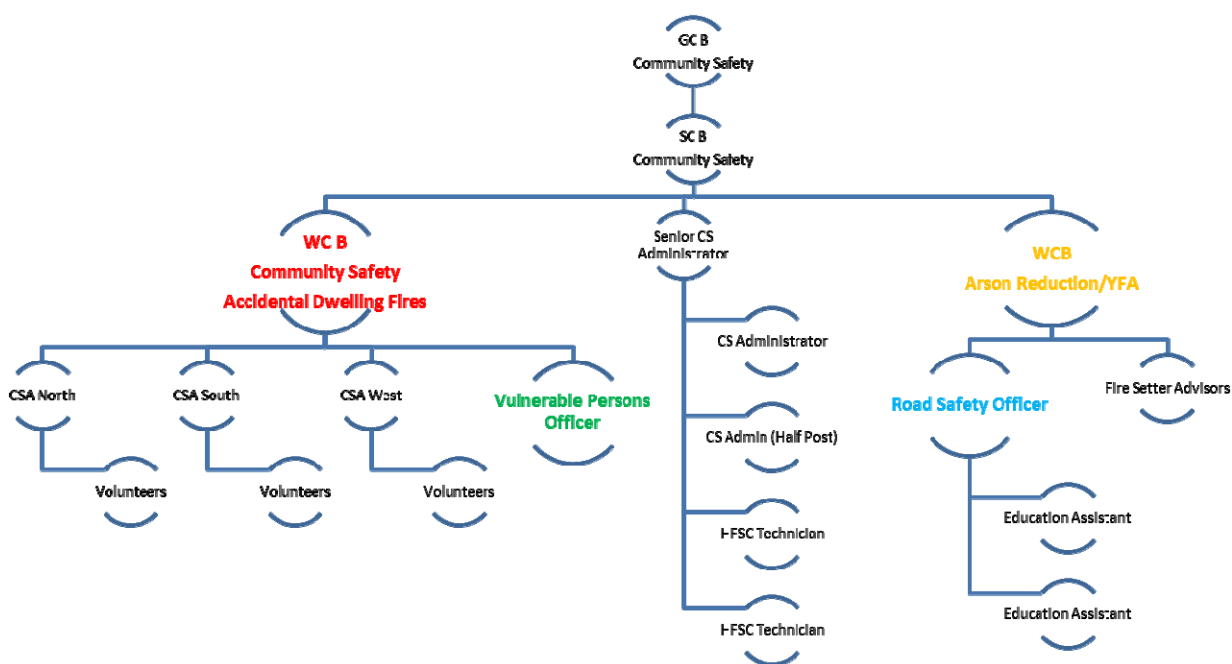
- 1.9 With this in mind and following the detailed research, which can be referenced in Part 3 of this report, the review has identified that the Service's priorities in terms of community risk, both now and in the future, can be summarised under four main headings:
- Accidental Dwelling Fires
 - Road Safety
 - Arson Reduction
 - Elderly and Vulnerable People
- 1.10 In response to the findings of the review, the report recommends that the Service should develop a revised overarching Community Safety Strategy and supporting delivery framework, based around the four areas detailed above. The delivery framework should clearly identify specific post holders who will be required to take responsibility for key Community Safety performance indicators. Whilst it is proposed that the four key areas above should become the primary focus for Community Safety work in future, the Service will obviously maintain the flexibility to react to other emerging risks as they present themselves.
- 1.11 The new Strategy should clearly identify the role of the Community Safety Department as well as the role of operational crews based at District level as their contribution is vital to the overall success of effective community engagement.

Community Safety Department Structure

- 1.12 The current structure of the Community Safety Department has evolved over the years as a direct result of past priorities which have since become either core business or are no longer relevant. Crucially, the departmental structure does not reflect the evidence based priorities identified above, which have been determined by sound current and predictive demographic data.
- 1.13 In order to address this situation and ensure that there is effective targeting of the new priority areas, as well as ensuring maximum efficiency from limited resources, the department now needs to be restructured to reflect the four new strategic priority areas identified by this review.
- 1.14 It is recommended that in future the department should establish four clear leads for each of the priorities identified above and that all individuals within the department must have clear lines of responsibility; they must also take ownership of key performance indicators, data sets, intervention strategies and evaluation processes.

1.15 Without such an approach the Service cannot realistically realise the maximum benefits of its investment in staff and infrastructure, which are vital to the delivery of high quality services to the general public and business communities. The proposed Community Safety Department structure, including the four departmental lead roles which have been highlighted is detailed in Fig 1 below.

Fig 1 Proposed Community Safety Department Structure



1.16 The above structure can easily be achieved by utilising many of the existing skills and personnel currently employed within the CS Department; however, as detailed above, the proposal does include a reduction in overall staffing numbers.

Community Safety Manager's Role

1.17 For the past three years the role of the Community Safety Manager has been held by a non-uniformed employee with specialist skills in Partnership liaison.

1.18 This arrangement is considered to have been effective and has clearly increased the Organisation's effectiveness in engaging with strategic community safety partnerships. However, the need for a stronger links between the Community Safety Department, operational crews and fire investigation, is now considered to be an important priority as one area clearly informs the other.

- 1.19 With this in mind the review has identified that the Community Safety Department has, for the last twelve months, back-filled the existing vacant Community Safety Manager's post with a uniformed Station Commander B, which has proven to be extremely effective in developing crucial inter-departmental links and communication. Vitally the link between the Community Safety Department and the operational side of Service business has been started to improve, whilst performance within strategic community safety partnerships has been maintained. As a result of this situation the report recommends that the Community Safety Department structure be adjusted to include a uniformed Station Commander B reporting directly to the Group Commander Technical Fire Safety on a permanent basis.

Community Safety Methods of Delivery

- 1.20 The review has identified that the Community Safety Department is currently engaged in a wide range of community safety activities designed to deliver key safety messages to the public and business community, including:

- Home Fire Safety Checks
- Road Safety activities
- Schools education programmes
- Water Safety activities
- Safeguarding children and young people
- Arson Reduction activities
- Volunteering
- Young Firefighters Association
- Community Safety Advisors

Home Fire Safety Checks

- 1.21 Historically, Home Fire Safety Checks have not been targeted as effectively as they could be, only utilising a small amount of the data available to inform the approach. As a result of this review, the Service has already begun to address this situation by procuring Pinpoint software, a web-based solution dedicated to increasing the impact of HFSCs, as well as securing access to key databases held by partner organisations which should further inform an evidence led approach to HFSC delivery.

Road Safety

- 1.22 Whilst Road Safety is an area in which the Service has evolved considerably over the years, and is currently delivering a number of high profile activities, there is no dedicated resource within the CS department. As a result of this report it is recommended that the Service establish a dedicated individual with clear responsibility for the development of road safety strategy and organisational performance in this area of work.

Schools Education

- 1.23 The Service has historically provided fire safety education to schools within the two counties for over ten years; in particular targeting has focused on Key Stage 2 pupils. However there is little evidence to justify this activity and to quantify success in terms of reducing risk within the two counties. As a result of this situation the Service is currently trialling a reduction in the Schools Education Programme focusing its efforts on those schools which serve communities which incorporate only the highest risk households. This will also have a positive impact on the activities of front line resources, freeing up valuable time which can be better spent delivering HFSCs and other intervention strategies to known “at risk” groups and individuals.

Water Safety

- 1.24 The review has identified that at present there is no clear plan or structure for the delivery of water safety messages and no rationale as to where in the two Counties water safety intervention should be targeted or which groups and individuals would most benefit from it.
- 1.25 The review has not identified water safety as a key priority for the Service and therefore it is recommended that in future any activity in this area should only be considered if there is clear evidence to suggest that Service intervention activities are necessary.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

- 1.26 The review has identified that Safeguarding is a statutory obligation for the Service which is governed by several pieces of legislation. Despite the presence of a policy and training having been delivered to staff, there is evidence to suggest that some areas of the policy are not being fully implemented or adhered to. As a result of these findings the review has recommended that Safeguarding children and adults should continue to be managed and maintained centrally as a specific reference within the Community Safety Department and that any areas of non-compliance are addressed as a priority.

Arson Reduction Activities

- 1.27 The review has identified that there is no clear policy within the Service in relation to arson reduction, although it is mentioned within the IRMP 2009-12 and the “How To” guide. There is also a dedicated Arson Reduction Manager post within the Community Safety Department’s structure.
- 1.28 The review has also identified that the vast majority of Secondary fires are caused by arson and that this in turn has an extremely negative impact on local communities and the local infrastructure and contributes to people’s negative perception of high crime rates and threatened personal security. Also Arson attacks on key premises within the community such as schools, community buildings and local businesses can be devastating in terms of

disruption to people's lives and standards of living, as well as the hidden costs to the local community and prosperity of the area. Finally Central Government continue to predict a rise in arson crime over the coming years as the economic outlook for the Country continues to be bleak. For this reason it is recommended that arson reduction should not only be maintained but it should in fact become one of the four primary activities of the Community Safety Department going forward.

Volunteering

- 1.29 The Service's Volunteering Scheme currently includes 32 volunteers, working in all three District areas. Fire Service volunteers provide a valuable support function to a wide variety of front line services and in particular they are available to assist with the delivery of community fire safety intervention activities and are considered to be an important resource of the Community Safety Department. However, the review has identified that they are not currently being utilised to maximum effect with regard to supporting the four key priorities identified on Page 3.
- 1.30 The review has also identified that in order to achieve this essential re-focus, coordination of their activities would be better placed under the control of the local Community Safety Advisors who work within the Districts.

Young Firefighters Association

- 1.31 For many years the Service has hosted its own Young Firefighters Association with well established units based at both Droitwich and Redditch. The Young Firefighters Association is viewed by the Service, the community and political leaders as an excellent method of engaging, supporting and mentoring young people from a wide variety of different backgrounds to become responsible, self-disciplined young adults and therefore must remain an essential activity for the organisation going forward.
- 1.32 The review has identified that there is currently no clear strategy in relation to the YFA. Individual branches are run in different ways, in the absence of standard protocols, and each relies heavily on goodwill and the contribution of many volunteer staff.
- 1.33 The report therefore recommends that there is a complete review of the YFA, to include a clear co-ordination role for the Community Safety Department, as well as development of a clear strategy for the YFA going forward and this should be supported by organisational policy where appropriate.

Community Safety Advisors

- 1.34 The Service currently employs four Community Safety Advisors who are located within each of the three Districts. The CSAs are considered to be the primary means of outreach to the local community for the FRS.

- 1.35 This review has recognised their invaluable contribution to the Community Safety Department and delivery of the community safety agenda; it therefore supports their role in the Service both now and in the future and this has been reflected in the proposed new Community Safety Department structure detailed in on Page 4.

Partnership Engagement

- 1.36 The Service has, for many years, positively engaged in Partnership working, at all levels, with great success. However little or no consideration has been given to evaluation of the local partnerships, which have been developed by both the Community Safety Department and Districts. With this in mind it is recommended that a review and evaluation of all Partnerships needs to be conducted in order to ensure that they meet the strategic needs of the Service and co-ordination of local partnership activity needs to be the responsibility of the Community Safety Department, ensuring that local representatives are actively working towards the Community Safety strategy.

Community Safety Budget/Costs

- 1.37 A full review of the Community Safety Budget has been undertaken as part of this review and the outcome has been that the Community Safety Department should be able to return a saving of £189,000 year on year for the Service.
- 1.38 The proposed changes to the budget were implemented on the 1st of April 2011 and the department now benefits from strict management and control of spending. Lead references are no longer authorised to spend and work on the basis of a 'zero budget'. All spending is strictly authorised by the Head of Department.
- 1.39 In addition the estimated savings from the proposed new Community Safety Department structure should realise a further saving of approximately £91,000 year on year.

Summary of Progress

- 1.40 In the best interests of the Service a number of changes have already been made in support of the recommendations detailed within this report, as not to do so would have hindered obvious areas of improvement to the detriment of the organisation and the communities it serves. All of the recommendations already implemented have been introduced with the full backing and authorisation of the SMB and they include the following:
- Restructure and reduction in Community Safety Department Revenue Budget.
 - Refocus of schools education programme to focus on high risk groups only
 - Partial re-structure of the Community Safety Department to include the introduction of HFSC Technicians, Senior Administrator and reduction of the Juvenile Firesetter post

- Procurement of Pinpoint software to support the evidence led approach to HFSC
- Entry into data sharing agreements with key partner agencies including the NHS and Age UK.
- The nomination of lead individuals within the Community Safety Department to take responsibility for key performance indicators.
- Change of focus for Community Safety Department intervention activities to include the four new areas of priority.
- Commencement of the development of intervention evaluation tools for all campaigns and activities
- The introduction of seasonal intervention campaigns based on internal and external indicative data.
- Enhanced internal data capture and performance monitoring procedures to inform reactive and long term departmental business.

1.41 A final outcome of the review has been the identification for an ongoing annual review of departmental business and strategy in order to ensure that the Service continues to keep track on the changing community risk profile and to ensure that the best possible service is provided to the public at all times.

The following table gives a summary of the recommendations identified by this report, including whether or not each recommendation has already been implemented in full, partially implemented or has yet to be implemented:

Summary of Recommendations	Anticipated Completion	Priority
The structure of the Community Safety Department needs to be changed to reflect the findings of this report	Apr-12	High
The Community Safety strategy should be reviewed and amended to reflect the findings of this review for all areas of work	Jun-12	Medium
Develop an evaluation tool to determine the successes of work undertaken in relation to reducing risk in the community	Apr-12	Medium
Identify those most at risk from fire and target them as a priority	Apr-12	High
The Community Safety Department needs to develop broader engagement with partner agencies and community groups to exchange information and target the most vulnerable	Jun-12	Medium
The HFSC Technicians and/or the Volunteer Programme could be extended to provide a cost effective solution to Community Safety in RDS locations	Jun-12	Low
A set procedure should exist to establish the causes of all fire related deaths and serious injuries, working closely with Fire Investigators	May-12	High
Determine the success of current Road Safety initiatives and incorporate into strategy as appropriate	Apr-12	Medium
The Schools Education Programme should be part of a targeted strategy that reflects the findings of this report	Complete	Medium
Safeguarding is a statutory responsibility and should be managed and maintained centrally as a reference of the Community Safety Department	Apr-12	High
Develop a robust system for monitoring operational activity to allow proactive and reactive initiatives to be developed	Complete	High
Determine volunteer involvement within the Service in supporting the reduction of risk including local access to volunteers	Jun-12	Medium
Complete a review of the YFA to include recommendations to move forward in line with the Service's strategic objectives	Jun-12	High

Develop an events strategy in line with the outcomes of this review	Apr-12	Medium
Administration for the CS and TFS department needs to be reviewed in its entirety	Complete	High
Establish a permanent Flexi-Duty Station Commander B post as the head of the Community Safety Department	Apr-12	High

The table shows that a number of recommendations of this report have already been implemented or started as they were deemed to be in the interest of the Service. These recommendations have been agreed by SMB outside of this report

13. Fire fighting Water Supply

Purpose of report

1. To provide a summary of the current position with respect to the provision, inspection and maintenance of water supplies and to request support with a national campaign to change legislation, which would benefit the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Recommendations

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- i) note the pro-active steps which have been taken to secure fire fighting water supplies; and***
- ii) endorse the Service's support of a national campaign which would result in a change in legislation around the costs for on-going maintenance of fire hydrants.***

Background

2. Fire and Rescue Services have a statutory duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to secure fire fighting water supplies.
3. Hydrants are currently owned by the individual water companies with maintenance costs being the responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Authority. Maintenance is undertaken either by the relevant water company and costs re-charged to the Fire and Rescue Authority, or minor works can be undertaken by in-house technicians.
4. All works within the public highway come under the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991, and operatives have to be trained and certified to comply with this Act. As a consequence operational crews no longer carry out this task.
5. There are approximately 18,000 fire hydrants in the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority area of which 13,000 are on wholetime/day crewed station grounds and 5,000 on retained station grounds.
6. Hydrant inspection and minor repairs are currently carried out by dedicated Hydrant Technicians and in addition to inspections, the hydrant technicians undertake minor repairs (such as hydrant posts and plates), and also inspect repair work carried out by the water companies' contractors prior to payments being made. This latter function is important as the quality of this work of some of these contractors can be very poor.

7. National guidance advocates a risk based inspection programme, where potentially the most used hydrants are inspected more regularly than ones where the incidence of use would be lower, but suggests a maximum inspection period of 2 years.

Hereford and Worcester position

8. Prior to 2011 the Service employed 2 hydrant inspectors who inspected and carried out minor repairs to approximately 3,000 hydrants per annum. At this time simply inspecting the hydrant infrastructure would have taken an estimated 6 years to complete. The inspection programme focussed on risk and meant that there was an estimated backlog of 10,000 fire hydrants which had not been inspected or maintained for around 5 years. The majority of these hydrants were on wholetime/day crewed station grounds and were not considered to be high risk.
9. In early 2011 in preparation for the 2011/12 financial year the Senior Management Board (SMB) reviewed the provision of hydrant maintenance. Following national guidance a risk based maintenance regime for hydrants has been adopted which will ensure that the inspection programme and maintenance work focuses on the hydrants that are a priority, at locations where the Service is likely to attend an incident, rather than treating all hydrants in the same way.
10. To support this approach SMB approved:
 - the introduction of two further technicians, with one technician becoming a 'lead' technician to coordinate reducing the backlog of work (funded from budget savings identified in year).
 - the procurement of a tablet type portable IT solution to capture hydrant data (accurate location under GPS), which will manage the risk based element and devise work schedules for the inspectors. More specifically, this will link directly in real time to the new Command and Control System and directly to Mobile Data Terminals in operational appliances.
11. The overall cost of the current regime (including £60,000 water company charges) is £146,000 and is contained within the current approved budget.

National Developments

12. Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (H&WFRS) has supported a national campaign by London Fire Brigade (LFB) with the aim of changing legislation so that the responsibility for hydrant maintenance would fall onto the water supply companies, with the Fire and Rescue Service only retaining responsibility for inspection.
13. LFB has contacted H&WFRS to gain further support to put more weight behind this campaign: for example, The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was in the process of drafting a Water Bill, which has now been delayed somewhat and LFB will be putting forward their case. LFB are also in the process of liaising with the Consumer Council for Water to ensure that

savings to council tax-payers are not recycled into increased costs for water rate payers.

14. Whilst there are obvious direct benefits to the Fire Service in cost savings, there are benefits to the water industry in that it would facilitate the removal of unnecessary hydrants. There is currently no incentive for a Fire and Rescue Service to ask for redundant hydrants to be removed as they are required to pay for the removal (in London alone this ranges from £419 to £979 dependent on the water supply company) and there are estimated to be a million such hydrants in the UK; they are a major source of potential leaks and contamination and therefore their removal provides advantages for the water companies.

Conclusion

15. Water supplies for fire fighting is an essential element of a firefighter's requirement to deliver front line fire fighting response. The Service has taken action to secure the provision of fire hydrants throughout the Authority's area but this does impact on the Authority's budgets. This financial impact is recognised throughout all fire and rescue services and therefore the Service has fully supported the LFB's attempt to amend existing legislation.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Yes	11

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	Yes	Reference to work being undertaken by LFB.

Additional Considerations

16. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Yes	Assets – whole document.
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	Yes	Risk based inspection – whole document.
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	

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14. Joint Consultative Committee Update

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held during December 2011.
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Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Policy and Resources Committee note the content of this report.

Update

2. The last Joint Consultative Committee meeting was held on 1 December 2011.
3. Key subjects currently open which are under discussion and development include:
 - Union officials – facilities and duties
 - Review of allowances
 - Use of driver/OIC on appliances
 - Industrial action
4. A number of items were closed down due either to their resolution or the fact that no further input was required by JCC. Agreement to this was confirmed by all sides.
5. New areas brought to JCC for discussion at this meeting included:
 - Arrangements for RDS staff working on Bank Holidays
 - Specific issues around the use of the Resilience Register
6. Dates for monthly JCC meetings throughout 2012 were agreed.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	Y	Paras 3 & 5

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	Y	Paras 3 & 5

Additional Considerations

7. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e. paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Y	Paras 3 & 5
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	Y	Paras 3 & 5
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	N	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	Y	Paras 3 & 5

Supporting Information

None

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