

Role of the Fire and Rescue Authority

The Fire and Rescue Authority is the publicly accountable body which manages the Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority is a statutory fire authority constituted under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Hereford & Worcester Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 ('the combination scheme').

Fire authorities derive their operational powers from the Act and other fire safety regulations, whilst the Combination Scheme establishes the Fire Authority and the fire service for the combined area of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The Fire Authority's principal decision-making powers affecting members of the public are contained within the Act and the Combination Scheme.

The composition of the Fire Authority is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Combination Scheme, which allows for up to twenty-five Members to be appointed to the Fire Authority by the 'constituent authorities', Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council. The number of representative members from each authority is proportionate to the number of local government electors in the area of each constituent authority. At present, there are 19 Members from Worcestershire County Council and 6 from Herefordshire Council.

The Authority's role is to:

- Set the strategic direction of the Authority and monitor service delivery
- Set the Annual Budget
- Set Council Tax precept levels
- Approve the Service's plans, policies and strategies, including statutory plans such as the Integrated Risk Management Plan, and the Service Performance Plan
- Approve the composition of the Committees of the Authority.
- Develop and maintain a scheme of delegated or reserved powers
- Put in place clearly documented and understood management processes for policy development, implementation and review and for decision making, monitoring and control and reporting, and formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of the Authority's business

- Ensure that the role of the executive members is properly defined in writing to include the responsibility for providing effective strategic leadership to the Authority and for ensuring that the Authority successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole
- Ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the Authority to provide appropriate advice on all financial matters, to keep proper financial records and accounts and to maintain an effective system of internal financial control
- Ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the Authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with
- Adopt clear protocols and codes of conduct to ensure that the implications for supporting community political leadership for the whole Authority are acknowledged and resolved