

# **Agenda**

## **Councillors**

### **Herefordshire:**

Brigadier P Jones, Mr D C Taylor

### **Worcestershire:**

Mr T Bean (Vice Chair), Mr A I Hardman (Chair), Mr P Mould, Mr D Prodger, Mr R Udall,  
Mr C Smith, Mr G Yarranton

#### **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)**

To invite any Councillor to declare any interest in any of the items on this Agenda.

#### **4. Confirmation of Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 July 2007 (copy attached – pink pages).

#### **5. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2007-08**

To inform Members of the current position on Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2007-08.

#### **6. 2008/09 Budget Preparation**

To provide information on the 2008/09 budget preparation process.

#### **7. Formula Grant Distribution**

To provide information on the Government's proposals on changes to the Formula Grant Distribution Mechanism.

#### **8. Update of Workshops Project**

To inform Members of the progress of the Workshops Project at Betony Road, Malvern.

#### **9. IRMP Project: 3rd Aerial Replacement**

To inform Members of the outcome of the IRMP Project: 3<sup>rd</sup> Aerial Replacement and seek approval to proceed towards procurement within the existing capital provision.

**Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority**  
**Budget Committee**  
**Wednesday, 25th July, 2007 Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings**  
**Way, Worcester (10.30 am)**

## **Minutes**

### **Present**

#### **Herefordshire:**

Mr JHR Goodwin, Brigadier P Jones, Mr DC Taylor.

#### **Worcestershire:**

Mr T Bean (VC), Mr AI Hardman (C), Mr DW Prodger, Mr CT Smith, Mrs B Passingham, Mr GC Yarranton.

### **Available Papers:**

- A. The agenda paper and appendices referred to (previously circulated).
- B. The Minutes of the meeting of the Budget Committee held on 22 January, 2007 (previously circulated).

(A copy of the agenda papers will be attached to the signed Minutes)

### **Mr T Bean, Vice-Chairman –in-the Chair**

#### **1. (Agenda item 1) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Mr P Mould.

#### **2. (Agenda item 2) Named Substitutes**

Mrs B Passingham substituted for Mr P Mould

#### **3. (Agenda item 3) Declaration of Interests**

None.

#### **4. (Agenda item 4) Confirmation of Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Budget Committee held on 22nd January 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

#### **5. (Agenda item 5) Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2007/08**

The Committee considered a report which informed Members of the current position on revenue Budgets for 2007-08.

The Treasurer made reference to the Uniform Pay award which had been settled at 0.4% higher than the 2% provided for in the base budget. He reminded Members that this was a budget risk identified when setting the 2007/08 budget and that provision had been made within balances. He stated that as always service management would endeavour to contain the sum within the existing budget (advising the Committee of the service impact as appropriate) but that this might not be possible as a result of additional risk detailed later.

With reference to the recent flooding incidents, also referred to in the report, Members were informed that in accordance with appropriate statutory regulations, the additional costs incurred by the Authority as a consequence of the floods, would be detailed and costed for each month whilst commitments were being made. The Authority would then be able to submit a claim to Central Government with a view to obtaining reimbursement for the costs at 100% of total costings instead of 85% in accordance with the current Bellwin Scheme. Members were also informed that any claim would include any further costings incurred by the Authority during the year in respect of other similar incidents. It was emphasised to Members that the Bellwin Scheme contained rules and regulations which must be adhered to and that it would not be a foregone conclusion that the Authority would achieve reimbursement.

The Treasurer re-assured the Committee that financial cover for costs to the Authority in respect of the floods were being borne from reserves and Central Government grants.

**RESOLVED: that the report be noted and subject to the resolution and recommendation contained in Minute 6 below, the current budget position including the proposed virement to fund another supplementary crewing trial be noted.**

**Mr A I Hardman – Chairman-in-the-Chair**

**6. (Agenda item No.6) Capital Budget Review**

The Committee considered a report which informed Members of the current position on Capital Budgets for 2007/08.

A Member referred to problems being encountered at other Authorities where Fire Appliances were being returned to the manufacturers due to their Appliance specifications not conforming to what had been requested by the Authorities.

The Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that very few Fire Appliance manufacturers were having to undertake the review that the Member was referring to. This Authority had, however, noted the review by other Authorities particularly as this Authority is in the process of obtaining new appliances.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to information from Warwickshire where reports have been requested from consultants regarding the feasibility of developing new Fire Stations.

A Member referred to the Pebworth project and to the information from Warwickshire, and requested that prior to any land purchase in respect of the Pebworth project, could officers report to the Committee giving details of any potential purchase.

**RECOMMENDED: that approval be given to the placing of advance orders for pumping appliances, paragraph 7 of the report refers.**

**RESOLVED: that**

- a) **the net slippage on 2006/07 capital budgets as referred to in paragraph 4 of the report be approved;**
- b) **the current position in relation to IRMP schemes be noted;**
- c) **the current position on expenditure be noted.**

The meeting ended at 11.02 am

Chairman .....

## 5. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2007-08 (Draft)

### Purpose of report

1. To inform Members of the current position on Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2007-08.
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### Revenue Budget

#### Background

2. In February 2007 the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) set a budget requirement for 2007-08 of £28.286m made up as below :

	£m
<b>Net Expenditure on Services</b>	<b>29.765</b>
Special Grants	(1.063)
Transfers from Ear-marked Reserves	(0.571)
Strengthening of General Balances	0.155
	<b>28.286</b>

3. This report provides information on expenditure to date against the profiled budget, and the current forecast out-turn position. It is based on actual expenditure for 4 months.

#### Revenue Budget

4. At the end of the first 4 months there are no significant variations forecast by budget-holders.
5. The Uniform staff pay award has been settled at 2.4%, which compares adversely to the 2.0% provided in the base budget. It is estimated that the additional cost of this will be £0.050m.
6. Members will recall that this issue was flagged as a budget risk and might require a draw on balances. However, the Service Management Team are currently investigating the impact of containing this within the existing budget along with other issues.
7. In the period to the end of July there has been a further increase in activity arising from the localised flooding mentioned for June.
8. The costs of responding to flooding incidents within the Service area, in terms of Retained Duty System (RDS) pay and Wholetime overtime are still being collated, as the applicable time period has increased, but are currently estimated at around £0.243m.
9. The impact on the budget out-turn is dependent on the level of activity in the remainder of the year. As mentioned in earlier reports to the Committee, in the period 18 -28 June

2007 alone the estimated average daily cost of dealing with flooding incidents was equal to the average daily cost for all incidents in June 2006 in terms of activity.

10. Members will, however, be aware that an additional £0.100m was provided in the 2007/08 budget for RDS pay. At this stage the budget is still forecast as being neutral.
11. In response to the national impact of flooding the Government has announced significant support for payment to Authorities under the Bellwin scheme. This arrangement will fund the full costs of dealing with the immediate impact (e.g rescues) beyond a threshold equal to 0.2% of an Authority's budget.
12. The threshold for this FRA is £0.056m and as at Period 4 additional expenditure has now reached beyond this level to £0.243m. However, the threshold applies only once in the financial year, so if there are further flooding incidents along with that already incurred the maximum liability that the FRA should face is £0.056m.

## **Capital Budget Review**

### **Background**

13. Members will be aware that the Capital Budget for 2007/08 was set at £4.218m, with a further £0.805m for USAR works at Droitwich, Kidderminster High Volume Pump (HVP) Works of £0.013 and Hot Fire Training Facility of £0.016 to be funded from accumulated special funding arrangements.
14. Slippage of £0.421m from 2006/07 capital budgets is included within these figures.
15. The 2007/08 revenue budget was built on the basis that these slipped capital sums would have been spent in 2006/07. Therefore, there are no adverse revenue consequences of the slippage.
16. The 2007/08 Capital Programme along with details of spend to date are detailed on Appendix 2.

### **Situation Report**

17. There is little change in transactions from the previous report for Capital as the majority of planned spend falls in a small number of areas.
18. There is no expenditure to date on the Vehicle Programme nor on IRMP Schemes respectively, due to long lead-in times and programme reconsiderations, plus previously reported Redditch Business Case Preparation and Pebworth site identification.
19. Expenditure on the Workshops Project has commenced plus other transactions in the area of Other Schemes that includes the installation and implementation of a new Financial Information System, where some £0.090m has been incurred following relative completion to agreed timelines, has been achieved.

**Recommendation**

**The Treasurer recommends that the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2007-08 is noted.**

**Background papers**

None

## H&W FRA - Budget Committee 12-October-2007

### 2007/08 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

	BUDGET TO DATE £m	ACTUAL TO JUL £m	VARIANCE TO DATE £m	ANNUAL BUDGET £m	FORECAST OUT-TURN £m	FORECAST VARIANCE £m
Wholetime Pay	3.963	3.967	0.004	13.769	13.738	(0.031)
USAR - total Cost	0.203	0.236	0.033	0.723	0.723	0.000
RDS Pay	0.736	0.693	(0.043)	2.989	2.998	0.009
Supplementary Crewing	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.036	0.036	0.000
Control Pay	0.216	0.229	0.013	0.760	0.761	0.001
Support Pay	1.055	1.039	(0.016)	3.228	3.178	(0.050)
Temp Staff	0.016	0.056	0.040	0.048	0.097	0.049
Other Employee Costs	0.015	0.009	(0.006)	0.035	0.032	(0.003)
	<b>6.204</b>	<b>6.229</b>	<b>0.025</b>	<b>21.588</b>	<b>21.563</b>	<b>(0.025)</b>
FF Pensions - Non Funded Costs	0.204	0.228	0.024	0.671	0.671	0.000
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYEE COSTS</b>	<b>6.408</b>	<b>6.457</b>	<b>0.049</b>	<b>22.259</b>	<b>22.234</b>	<b>(0.025)</b>
PPPM	0.041	0.089	0.048	0.165	0.165	0.000
	<b>0.041</b>	<b>0.089</b>	<b>0.048</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>0.000</b>
CFS	0.072	0.032	(0.040)	0.286	0.286	0.000
Other Service Delivery	(0.001)	0.000	0.001	0.052	0.052	0.000
	<b>0.071</b>	<b>0.032</b>	<b>(0.039)</b>	<b>0.338</b>	<b>0.338</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Personnel	0.062	0.053	(0.009)	0.249	0.249	0.000
Approved Centre	0.004	0.000	(0.004)	0.014	0.014	0.000
Training	0.135	0.076	(0.059)	0.540	0.540	0.000
	<b>0.201</b>	<b>0.129</b>	<b>(0.072)</b>	<b>0.803</b>	<b>0.803</b>	<b>0.000</b>
FRA Costs	0.058	0.014	(0.044)	0.230	0.230	0.000
Health & Safety	0.008	0.011	0.003	0.030	0.030	0.000
ESG	0.247	0.253	0.006	0.834	0.834	0.000
Hydrant Maintenance	0.014	0.012	(0.002)	0.055	0.055	0.000
Fleet	0.127	0.108	(0.019)	0.506	0.506	0.000
IT	0.212	0.171	(0.041)	0.470	0.470	0.000
Comms	0.135	0.144	0.009	0.380	0.380	0.000
Admin	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.160	0.160	0.000
HQ Catering	0.000	0.005	0.005	0.000	0.009	0.009
Property	0.722	0.816	0.094	1.201	1.181	(0.020)
	<b>1.563</b>	<b>1.574</b>	<b>0.011</b>	<b>3.866</b>	<b>3.855</b>	<b>(0.011)</b>
Insurances	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.299	0.299	0.000
Finance SLAs etc	0.013	0.014	0.001	0.132	0.132	0.000
Miscellaneous - DoF Monitoring	0.020	0.015	(0.005)	0.080	0.080	0.000
Capital Financing	0.102	0.099	(0.003)	1.607	1.607	0.000
Firelink Contingency - committed	0.084	0.037	(0.047)	0.296	0.159	(0.137)
Firelink Contingency	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.137	0.137
	<b>0.219</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>(0.054)</b>	<b>2.414</b>	<b>2.414</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>TOTAL OTHER COSTS</b>	<b>2.095</b>	<b>1.989</b>	<b>(0.106)</b>	<b>7.586</b>	<b>7.575</b>	<b>(0.011)</b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>8.503</b>	<b>8.446</b>	<b>(0.057)</b>	<b>29.845</b>	<b>29.809</b>	<b>(0.036)</b>
Special Grants	(0.101)	(0.101)	0.000	(1.119)	(1.119)	0.000
<b>EXPENDITURE AFTER GRANTS</b>	<b>8.402</b>	<b>8.345</b>	<b>(0.057)</b>	<b>28.726</b>	<b>28.690</b>	<b>(0.036)</b>
to/(from) EMR				(0.595)	(0.595)	0.000
Planned transfer to General Balances				0.155	0.155	0.000
Out-turn transfer to/(from) Gen Balances					0.036	0.036
<b>NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>				<b>28.286</b>	<b>28.286</b>	<b>0.000</b>

## **6. 2008/09 BUDGET PREPARATION**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide information on the 2008/09 budget preparation process.
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2. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by the FRA, the projected budget requirement for 2008/09 is £29.472m.
  3. As Members will be aware there was little firm evidence on the Government's grant intentions beyond 2007/08. Based on a very cautious view of grant (frozen at 2007/08 cash level) and a Council tax increase of 3.5% giving a resulting tax level of £67.57, a potential budget "gap" of £0.429m was identified.
  4. Officers have continued to look at ways in which this gap could be closed and the impact on the FRA strategies, and these will be reported on at the next meeting of this Committee.
  5. It is possible that this gap could move significantly as a result of some of the issues raised in the formula grant consultation paper elsewhere on this Agenda.
  6. At this stage Members' attention is drawn to 3 areas of variation identified since the Medium Term Financial Plan was agreed:
    - a. Uniformed pay award. As reported in the Budget Monitoring Report this was at 2.4% rather than the 2.0% budgeted. The on going full year cost is £0.070m.
    - b. Support Pay Award. The latest employer offer would cost approximately £0.015m more than is currently forecast.
    - c. Council Tax-base. The Billing Authorities are warning of a significant impact of Council Tax Banding appeals on the Council Tax Base. Whilst this has not yet been quantified, and the FRA has been cautious in its assumptions, it is possible that the tax yield could be lower than anticipated.
  7. Work continues on reviewing all aspects of the 2008/09 projection, including options to close the gap referred to at (3) above and to mitigate the issues raised at (6) and details will be brought to the next Budget Committee.
  8. As in previous years there is a timetable of Authority meetings and workshops established to discuss budget proposals :-  
  

23 Nov 2007	-	Budget Committee – Initial expenditure proposals
07 Dec 2007	-	Members Budget Seminar
13 Dec 2007	-	Fire and Rescue Authority
24 Jan 2008	-	Budget Committee
19 Feb 2008	-	Fire and Rescue Authority – Precept Setting

**Recommendation**

**The Treasurer recommends that the Committee note the contents of this report.**

**Background papers**

None

## **7. FORMULA GRANT DISTRIBUTION**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide information on the Government's proposals on changes to the Formula Grant Distribution Mechanism.
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### **Introduction**

2. The Formula Grant Distribution Mechanism was last reviewed for the 2006/07 Grant Settlement and is now configured in the "Four-Block Model", which is far less transparent than the previous Formula Spending Share (FSS) system.
3. The current policy is that the formula is only reviewed in line with the 3-year settlement period, which means that it is under review for the 2008/09 to 2010/11 period.
4. DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) has now issued consultation on possible changes to the Formula on which it is seeking views.
5. Although DCLG has moved to a 3 year Grant Settlement it is still expected that the grant for the second 2 years will not be made available as the final figures for 2008/09.
6. For each of the proposals, DCLG has provided exemplification of the impact on 2007/08 Grant, but has not shown the effect of combining different options together, or of relating them to the overall grant pot for 2008/09.
7. The exemplified impact of relevant proposals is shown in Appendix 1 and although some of the options may appear to give significant increases in grant to this Authority, it will be at the expense of other Authorities. There is likely to be a damping mechanism and it is impossible to say how a combination of these options would translate into actual grant.
8. There are 2 areas of specific concern to the FRA:
  - a. The Relative Needs element, which attempts to divert resources from less needy and more wealthy areas to more needy less well off ones. The current element is based on a subjective judgement that continues to make the false assumption that Herefordshire and Worcestershire fall into the former category and some of the options strengthen this false assumption.
  - b. Area Cost Adjustment (ACA). With a national pay-scale for Firefighters which make up 60-70% of FRA budgets it continues to be an inequality that ACA has a significant impact on grant distribution.
9. The proposed response specifically refers to these items.

10. The consultation requests response on specific questions relating to the proposals. These specific questions (as they relate to the Fire and Rescue Authority) are shown in Appendix 2 and a proposed response is shown in Appendices 3 and 4).

### **Other Fire FSS Changes**

11. There is only one specific change to the Fire & Rescue element of the formula, which relates to a data update to technical element of the formula. This is used to measure the relative expenditure of all FRAs and the adjustment would give significant additional grant to H&W FRA.
12. This update reflects the generalism that shire FRA are now spending relatively more to meet the new statutory duties under the 2004 Act, whereas the existing generous resourcing of Metropolitan areas enables them to cope within existing resources.
13. The change, whilst welcome, involves a significant shift of resources from London and the Metropolitan areas to the Shires, and may suffer due to the weight of influence held by the former.

### **Conclusion**

14. The information contained in the proposals is insufficient to determine what grant the Authority will receive in 2008/09 or beyond. At this stage the assumption contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which was prudent, will continue to be used as the planning tool.
15. It is proposed that, as previously, the response to the consultation is in 2 parts. The draft letter at Appendix 3, and the technical detail (as an Appendix to the letter) as shown at Appendix 4.

### **Future Timetable**

16. As in previous years there is a timetable of Authority meetings and workshops established to discuss budget proposals
- 23-Nov-2007 : Budget Committee : Initial expenditure proposals
  - 07-Dec-2007 : Members Budget Seminar : Grant Impact
  - 13-Dec-2007 : Fire and Rescue Authority
  - 24-Jan-2007 : Budget Committee
  - 19-Feb-2007 : Fire and Rescue Authority : Precept Setting
17. However, as there is still uncertainty over the exact date of the grant settlement announcement, the date of the Members' Seminar is not yet fixed.

## **Recommendation**

**The Treasurer recommends that Members:**

- **Note the contents of this report.**
- **Approve the proposed response to DCLG.**

## **Background papers**

None

**Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority  
Budget Committee  
12 October 2007  
Summary of Exemplified Changes to 2007/08 Grant**

	<b>Raw Grant £m</b>	<b>Actual Grant* £m</b>
<b>2007/08 Grant</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>10.4</b>
<b>Fire Options</b>		
FIR 1      Regression Factor Update	0.7	n/a
<b>Area Cost Adjustment</b>		
ACA1	0.0	n/a
ACA2	0.0	n/a
ACA3	0.0	n/a
ACA4	0.0	n/a
<b>Relative Needs</b>		
Option 1	(0.3)	0.0
Option 2	(0.1)	0.0
Option 3	0.1	0.0
Option 4	0.0	0.0
<b>Grant Floors</b>		
limit to 2%	n/a	0.0
limit to 1%	n/a	0.1
limit to 0%	n/a	0.2

\* Actual Grant is after impact of Floors and Ceilings (scaling) applied in the actual 2007/08 grant.

**Note** : some of the exemplification is at raw grant and some at final grant level. n/a indicates it was not exemplified at this level.

## 2008/09 – 2010/11 Grant Formula Consultation

### List of Relevant Questions

#### Fire and Rescue

Question 10: Do you agree that the expenditure base used to determine the coefficients should be updated (FIR1)? YES or NO

#### Area Cost Adjustment

Question 15: Do you agree with the proposal to update the weights given to the rates cost adjustment (ACA1)? YES or NO

Question 16: Do you agree with the proposal to update the weights given to the labour cost adjustment (ACA2)? YES or NO

Question 17: Do you agree we should revise the geography of the ACA?

Question 18 : Which option for revising the geography of the ACA do you prefer? ACA3 or ACA4

Question 19: Do you have any other proposals for revising the geography of the ACA?

#### Relative Needs and Resources

Question 20: Do you think there should be further judgemental change in the extent to which the system takes account of needs or resource? YES or NO

Question 21: If yes what change would you suggest?

#### Grant Floors

Question 22: Do you support the approach of reducing the levels of grant floors over the 3 years of the settlement? YES or NO

Question 23: Do you have any other suggestions on the way in which the grant floors system should be operated? YES or NO

## DRAFT LETTER TO DCLG

Dear Sir

### Formula Grant Consultation

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority wish to make it absolutely clear that it cannot afford to see resources diverted away from Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The following facts warrant consideration

- 5.3% of the land area of Combined Fire Authorities is protected by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.2% of the resident population of Combined Fire Authorities live in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
- 3.0% of the total net budget requirement of the Combined Fire Authorities is attributable to Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 2.4% of the total Revenue Support Grant and redistributed non-Domestic Rates allocated to the Combined Fire Authorities is payable to Hereford & Worcester.
- Of the 24 Combined Fire Authorities 5 (21%) have a higher Band D tax.
- 14 (58% ) have a higher cost per citizen.
- 23 (96%) have greater government grant per citizen.

Any diversion of resources cannot be balanced by adding to the Council Tax burden or jeopardizing public safety by budget cuts.

There are a number observations to be made in response to the specific consultation questions and these are included in an appendix to this letter.

The fundamental point remains that Council tax-payers in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are already financing a disproportionate share of Fire and Rescue Service expenditure compared to other parts of the country.

Yours etc.

**Detail Response to Formula Grant Consultation  
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority**

**Question 10**

The FRA supports the up-dating of the expenditure base, as it reflects the true movement in the balance of spending arising from the new duties in the 2004 Act.

**Questions 15-19**

The FRA can see no reason for ACA to apply to any FRA except perhaps to London. Between 60 and 70% of FRA costs relate to the national pay-scales for uniformed staff and, excepting London weighting, staff are paid identically throughout England.

It remains an in-equity, why surrounding FRAs should enjoy the benefits of an un-justified ACA, whilst H&W is not in receipt of it.

**Questions 20-21**

The FRA believes that the inclusion of a Need/Resources element in the formula is an admission that it is flawed. To base the adjustment on a subjective call supports this view further. There is a worrying trend for CLG to consider Herefordshire and Worcestershire as wealthy with little need. This is not the case.

The FRA believes this element of the formula should be dropped and cannot in principal, therefore support any changes in subjective judgement.

**Questions 22-23**

Since the move to precepting status the FRA has never received its full grant entitlement. The loss to the ceiling and scaling has been significant, particular in respect of the relative level of Band D tax resulting.

The FRA fully supports the proposals to taper the floor, with a corresponding impact on the scaling factor. Although there are no details regarding the rate at which the reduction will be made it should aim to be at a zero level in the final year of the 3 year settlement.

**Other Comments**

It is very disappointing that there are still no proposals reflect the changes in statutory responsibilities brought about by the Fire & Rescue Services Act. Indeed all the top up elements still relate to Fire risk and not the greater Community Risk which is now a statutory duty.

It is also of concern that there is no reflection of the statutory duty to attend RTA, in the amended formula as this is having a significant impact on resource demands.

Concern is also expressed that the distorting effect of the Coastline factor has not been reviewed. On the basis that it was initially introduced as a stop-gap' to deal with the issue of re-enforcement arrangements, it is disappointing to see that alternative measures have not been investigated.

The FRA would also draw attention to the fact that there is no mention of the impact of re-instating the temporary reduction in grant for 2006/07 and 2007/08 to claw-back the 2004/05 transitional grant. It is assumed that this omission is simply due to the fact that the re-instatement will be automatic.

## **8. UPDATE OF WORKSHOPS PROJECT**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform Members of the progress of the Workshops Project at Betony Road, Malvern.
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2. The new Workshops Project is the next major milestone in the Authority's Property Strategy.
  3. Significant progress had been made in designing alterations to the existing building (a former plastics factory) purchased for the Service's new Workshops. Site works are anticipated to be finished in the spring with the new facility being fully functional around May 2008. Members visited the site on 24 September 2007.
  4. In summary this facility will provide:
    - Five dedicated vehicle service bays with professional workshop.
    - A ladder maintenance bay with fixed test facilities.
    - A centralised logistics facility (incorporating Equipment Support Group, emergency stores, fleet stores, BA maintenance and equipment impound).
    - Modern fit for purpose office accommodation and facilities including a dedicated meeting/training room.
    - Outside storage areas for ladders, hose reels, spare wheels, a battery store, bulk lubricants and waste.
    - A secure site with a perimeter fence, CCTV and intruder alarm.
  5. A 'design and build' approach as used to provide the Authority's Service Headquarters is being used to ensure that the project moves forward to completion as soon as possible. Formal planning consent has been submitted and Members will be given the opportunity to view detailed plans of the proposed new Workshops once approval has been received.
  6. Community Safety and Human Resources are developing outline plans for use of the additional 'overspill' floor area, for detailed consideration in due course.

### **Recommendation**

For Members to note the report.

### **Background papers**

None

## **9. IRMP PROJECT: 3<sup>RD</sup> AERIAL REPLACEMENT**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the IRMP Project: 3<sup>rd</sup> Aerial Replacement and seek approval to proceed towards procurement within the existing capital provision.
- 

### **Background**

2. The Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (2006-9) contains an undertaking to “Review the need to maintain the 3rd Aerial appliance” (Objective 3 page 22).
3. Officers have undertaken a project aimed at identifying; the level and nature of working at height risk, existing controls including the two new Aerial Ladder Platforms and finally a solution to address any recognised gap.
4. In March 2007, Officers received a report outlining the risk profile for aerial and working at height operations within Hereford & Worcester. On this basis, further work was commissioned to establish possible controls to address that risk in terms of suitable appliances to supersede the Hydraulic Platform currently based at Bromsgrove.
5. In July 2007, Officers considered a user requirement that, following market analysis, proposed a combination providing a basic pumping appliance with an aerial capability to support working at height arrangements within the Service.
6. In September 2007, Officers further approved recommendations regarding location and method of crewing.

### **Analysis of Current Position**

7. Given the relatively low number of incidents that aerial appliances are used, data analysis was undertaken using all incidents that aerial appliances were used and where ‘Working at Height’ informative messages had been recorded.
8. In light of the initial risk profiling and the impact of new guidance and legislation, a case for an enhanced capability on ‘front line’ appliances in identified risk areas is apparent.
9. An assessment of the Service’s approaches identified that, in addition to personal securing systems (known as Working at Height Kit), there are now 2 principle types of work systems employed by Fire and Rescue Services:
  - a. “Traditional” aerial appliances – TL/HP/ALP provide an ability to carry out Fire Service operations and support rescues from height
  - b. A third option, providing extinguishing media, lighting, vision and limited remote manipulation.

10. Within a) and b), there is a further opportunity for Hereford & Worcester to consider functionality of a traditional front-line fire appliance and combining this with an ability for working at height, achieving a lowering of risk for several incident types and thereby providing an enhanced response to that currently available.

### **Preferred Solution**

11. Replacement of the 3rd Aerial with another traditional appliance (Aerial Ladder Platform) would not greatly enhance the capability already provided and would not address issues of restricted access and maintenance of availability highlighted in the risk assessment.
12. A bespoke remotely operated appliance is still in development within West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service. Whilst it would be possible to order a vehicle of this type, it would not meet the fundamental need for Hereford & Worcester for improved systems of work for working at height as no capacity is included for any form of manipulator for inspection/removal of debris, etc.
13. A combined solution whereby an Aerial Platform be provided as an enhanced capability for a new Pumping Appliance would see the specific issues relating to access within city and town centre risk areas addressed, with 'Working at Height' as an important, but secondary issue.

### **Recommendation**

**The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Budget Committee approve the capital replacement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aerial currently stationed at Bromsgrove with a Combined Appliance similarly located.**

### **Background papers**

- Fire and Rescue Service Circular 32/2006 - Fighting Fires in High Rise Buildings
- Fire and Rescue Service Circular 71/2006 - Supplementary Advice on Fighting Fires in High Rise Buildings and,
- Fire and Rescue Service Circular 74/2006 - Fire Service Manual – Safe Work at Height