

Agenda

Councillors

Herefordshire:

Mr J Goodwin

Worcestershire:

Mrs M L Drinkwater (Vice-Chairman), Mr A Fry (Chairman), Mr J Holden, Mr E Moore,
Mrs F Oborski, Mrs B Passingham

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 of the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee held on Friday 14 September 2007 (copy attached – pink pages).

5. Quarterly Performance Report

To provide a review of performance against the Best Value Performance Indicator targets established within the Corporate Plan 2007/08, and progress being made towards the targets set on local indicators internally developed to measure the Service's core business.

6. Flooding Update

To propose terms of reference for the Best Value Policy and Performance (BVPP) Committee review of the Fire Authority's contribution during the recent major flooding events.

7. Customer Surveys 2006/07 – Summary Analysis

To provide Members with an overview analysis of Customer Surveys carried out during 2006/07.

Minutes

Present:

Herefordshire:

Mr JHR Goodwin.

Worcestershire:

Mrs M L Drinkwater (Vice-Chairman), Mr A Fry (Chairman), Mr E Moore and Mrs B
Passingham.

Available Papers:

- A. The agenda paper and appendices referred to (previously circulated).
- B. The Minutes of the meeting of the Best Value, Policy and Performance
Committee held on 5th June, 2007 (previously circulated)

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

71. (Agenda item 1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr J Holden and Mrs F M Oborski.

72. (Agenda item 2) Named Substitutes

None

73. (Agenda item 3) Declaration of Interests

None.

74. (Agenda item 4) Confirmation of Minutes

**Resolved: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th June, 2007, be
confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

75. (Agenda item 5) Quarterly Performance Reporting

The Committee considered a report which referred to the current method of reporting Quarterly Performance to the Committee which focussed on those areas of exceptional positive or negative performance, and which recommended that the format be streamlined to fully facilitate that role.

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Friday, 14 September 2007 at 10.30 am in Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles
Hastings Way, Worcester**

It was emphasised that a more detailed quarterly analysis would be available to Members on request.

Resolved: that the revised format of Quarterly Performance reporting as set out in the report as a basis for all future performance reporting to the Committee be accepted.

76. (Agenda Item 6) Q1 Performance Report 1 April - 30 June 2007

The Committee considered a report which provided a review of performance regarding the achievement of the Best Value Performance indicator targets established within the Corporate Plan 2006/07, and progress being made towards the local targets based on local indicators internally developed to measure the Service's core business.

The officers gave a Power Point presentation in respect of the above report.

With regard to risk indicators and the community, reference was made to the positive contribution to the delivery of the Authority's Community Safety Strategy by the Young Firefighters Association Groups which were currently being hosted at Redditch and Malvern. The Committee noted that a report regarding the Young Fire Fighters Association would be submitted to the next main Fire and Rescue Service meeting.

The Chairman expressed his support for the contribution being made by the Groups and for furtherance of additional groups within the Service where possible.

The officers emphasised that although future reports will be streamlined for Committee purposes, a full detailed analysis will be available to Members on request. The correct level of performance scrutiny would be maintained and any exceptional areas of concern or otherwise would be reported to the Committee. Any previous, or future, areas of concern brought to officers attention would be continually monitored.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

77. (Agenda item 7) Measuring and Challenging Recruitment

The Committee considered a report which informed Members of the progress made regarding the recruitment campaign and positive action measures, including future strategy recommendations.

Circulated to Members at the meeting and attached to the Minute book copy of the Minutes were the documents entitled 'Measuring and Challenging Recruitment Processes Vol.1 and Vol.2'. Members noted that Vol.2 largely supported the information contained in Vol.1.

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The Chairman expressed the view that the current recruitment processes and the measures referred to in the action plan were positive ways forward for the Fire Authority in an effort to recruit appropriate candidates into the Service. He also expressed his thanks to everyone who had contributed to producing the recruitment strategy and documentation.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

78. (Agenda item 8) Communications to All Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

The Committee considered a report which informed Members of the processes in place to ensure information is available in appropriate formats and languages and reminded Members of references made at a previous meeting in relation to this matter.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

79. (Agenda item 9) Unwanted Fire Signals

The Committee considered a report which updated Members on Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS).

The report referred to the additional work being undertaken to reduce the level of unwanted fire signals, and the new actions identified to combat the problem.

Members noted that further reports on the impact of the new measures proposed in the report would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Resolved: that the report be noted and a that a further report be submitted to the next meeting detailing those premises where repeated UFS were being received.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.

Chairman.....

5. Q2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

1 JULY 2007 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2007

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a review of performance against the Best Value Performance Indicator targets established within the Corporate Plan 2007/08, and progress being made towards the targets set on local indicators internally developed to measure the Service's core business.
2. The graphs shown in the following report demonstrate the Service's performance in specific areas. Where national data is available the Authority's performance is compared with all other Fire and Rescue Authorities, as well as family and regional group peers. This specific report includes draft 2006/07 national data to determine the most up to date benchmarking against national comparisons. However, the data available does not facilitate regional and family group comparisons at present.
3. To review progress made towards the objectives laid down within the Corporate Plan and progress against other Corporate Projects and focus upon exceptions.

Performance Update Quarter 2 2007-08

4. Operational activity in the second quarter appears to have been affected by weather conditions. In July, mean temperatures were generally close to or slightly below average. Maximum temperatures were generally below average. Rainfall was well above average, with England and Wales recording over double their average July rainfall, and some Stations in the Worcestershire area recording over 4 times their average July rainfall. August was the coldest August since 1993 with rainfall around 50% of average monthly figures. September was characterised by mean temperatures generally close to or slightly above average. Rainfall in September 2007 was around half of the average September monthly rainfall. (*source BBC website*)
5. As a result, there has been a 19% increase in special services compared with Quarter 1, with 771 incidents attended compared with 647 in Quarter 1. This was mainly due to the flooding in July, with 463 out of the 771 special service incidents occurring in July. The average number of special service incidents for Quarter 2 over the past four years is 540 incidents, so the effect of the flooding was to increase activity in Quarter 2 2007/08 by 42%.
6. The number of fires attended has reduced by 18% in Quarter 2 compared with Quarter 1, with 711 incidents attended compared with 865 incidents in Quarter 1. It has also reduced by 46% compared with the same quarter last year when 1334 incidents were attended. The 2006 figure was mainly due to abnormally hot and dry conditions experienced in that specific period. The average

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number of fires attended for Quarter 2 over the past four years is 1173 incidents, so 711 incidents in Quarter 2 represents a decrease of 39% on that average.

7. The number of false alarms attended has increased by 14% when compared with Quarter 1, with 1076 incidents attended compared with 947 in Quarter 1. However, the number of false alarms incidents has reduced by 16% when compared with Quarter 2 2006/07 where 1284 false alarm incidents were attended. This pattern matches that in previous years. The average number of false alarms attended for Quarter 2 over the past four years is 1170 incidents, so 1076 incidents in Quarter 2 represents a decrease of, 8% on that average.
8. The total number of fires, special services and false alarms combined has, therefore, increased when compared with Quarter 1 with 2558 incidents attended in Quarter 2 compared with 2459 in Quarter 1, an increase of 4%. However, the total number of incidents has reduced by 22% when compared with Quarter 2 2006/07 where 3316 incidents were attended. The average number of total incidents attended for Quarter 2 over the past four years is 2883 incidents, so 2558 incidents in Quarter 2 represents a decrease of 11% on that average.
9. The following tables demonstrate Quarter 2 activity compared with the last five quarters and compared this quarter's activity with the 2nd Quarter for the last four years:

Previous Quarters:

Quarter	All Fires	Special Service Incidents	All False Alarms	Total Incidents
Quarter 2 2007/08	711	771	1076	2558
Quarter 1 2007/08	865	647	947	2459
Quarter 4 2006/07	689	484	865	2038
Quarter 3 2006/07	623	484	989	2096
Quarter 2 2006/07	1334	698	1284	3316

Same Quarter – Previous Years:

Quarter	All Fires	Special Service Incidents	All False Alarms	Total Incidents
Quarter 2 2007/08	711	771	1076	2558
Quarter 2 2006/07	1334	698	1284	3316
Quarter 2 2005/06	920	477	1112	2509
Quarter 2 2004/05	898	511	1066	2475
Quarter 2 2003/04	1540	475	1217	3232

10. The remainder of this report focuses on the end of financial year projections for the BVPIs using seasonal adjustments where possible. Current projections indicate that at the end of year, the position regarding the performance indicators will be as follows:

- Community
 - 6 Indicators are estimated to be 'green' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to reach the internal target for the indicators.
 - 1 Indicator is estimated to be 'amber' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to just miss the internal target for the indicator.
 - 3 Indicators are estimated to be 'red' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to miss the internal target for the indicators.
 - Business Process
 - 9 Indicators are estimated to be 'green' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to reach the internal target for indicators.
 - 1 Indicator is estimated to be 'red' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to miss the internal target for the indicator.
 - Finance and Resources
 - 4 Indicators are estimated to be 'green' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to reach the internal target for indicators.
 - 1 Indicator is estimated to be 'red' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to miss the internal target for the indicator.
 - People
 - 5 Indicators are estimated to be 'green' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to reach the internal target for indicators.
 - 1 Indicator is estimated to be 'amber' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to just miss the internal target for the indicator.
 - 3 Indicators are estimated to be 'red' at the end of the financial year and the Service is predicted to miss the internal target for the indicator.
11. A full copy of the performance report showing all the indicators is available on request.

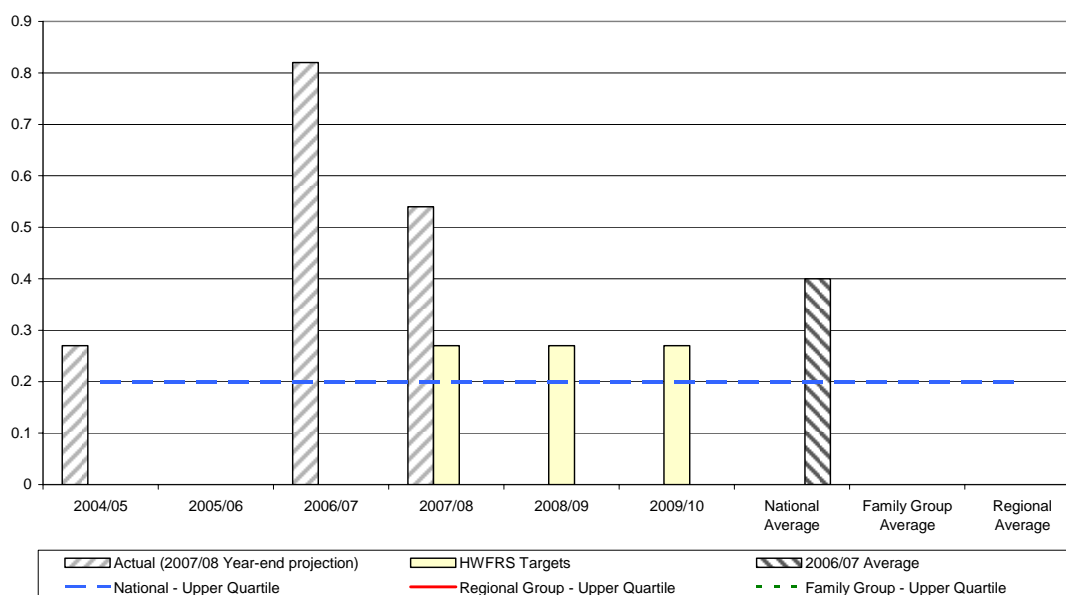
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Community

12. These indicators evaluate how successful we are at reducing risk in the community and broadly measure the general levels of activity and public satisfaction with the Fire Service. Following Quarter 2 we are on track to meet our internal targets in the number of injuries resulting from accidental dwelling fires, the number of people escaping unharmed from accidental dwelling fires and the number of non-domestic fires. We are currently estimating that we will only just miss the internal target for the number of accidental dwelling fires attended.
13. Even though we have had only one fatality from accidental dwelling fires, we are cautiously projecting that we will miss our internal target for the number of deaths resulting from accidental dwelling fires, based on projections using data from previous years. The table and graph below shows the projected estimate for the year compared with the internal target set for the indicator:

Community			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 143ii – Number of deaths from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population	0.27 (2 fatalities)	0.544 (4 fatalities)	Regrettably the Service attended a house fire in Evesham in September resulting in a fatality; we are currently awaiting the result of the coroner's inquest. The forecast of 4 fire deaths is based on an analysis of seasonal data from previous years and is an improvement on the six deaths reported in 2006/07. The target for 2007/08 is based on 2 fatalities. The direction of travel over previous years has been mixed for this indicator with no fire deaths from accidental dwelling fires in 2005/06, but a poorer year in 2006/07. As a result, in the latest draft data available at a national level from 2006/07, the Service is in the lowest quartile.

BVPI 143ii Number of deaths from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population

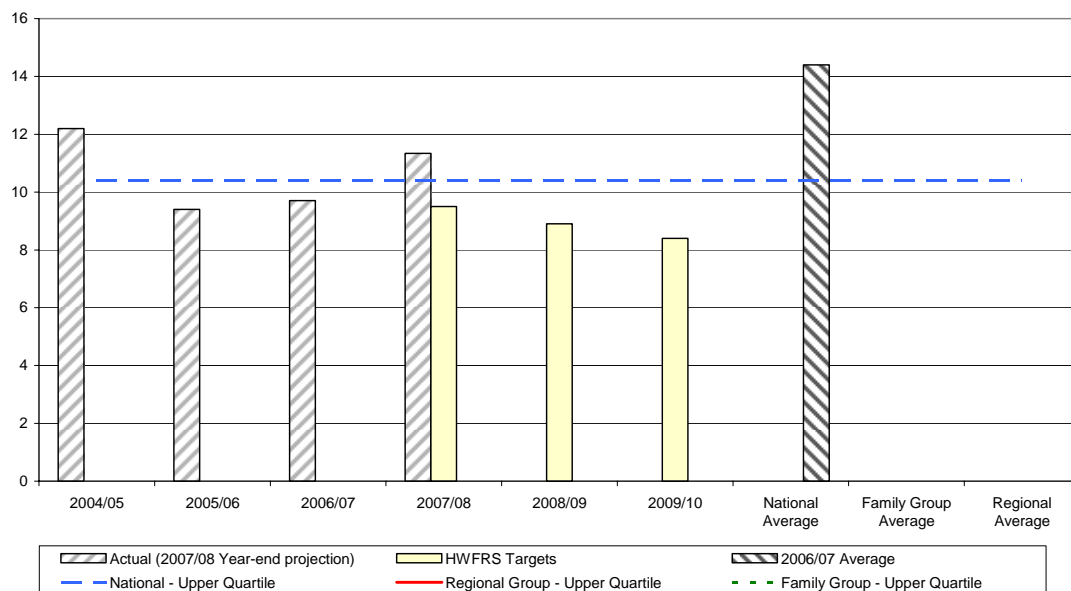


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14. We are also expected to achieve our internal targets by increasing the number of fires attended where a smoke alarm activated and reducing the number of fires attended where no smoke alarm was fitted. However, we are projecting that we will miss the target for the number of fires attended where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate. The table and graph below shows the projected estimate for the year compared with the internal target set for the indicator:

Community			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 209ii – percentage of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate	9.7% (39 fires)	11.34 (46 fires)	In Quarter 2, the Service attended 13 dwelling fires where an alarm did not activate compared with 12 in Quarter 1. As a result, current projections estimate that we will miss our target of 9.7%. The direction of travel for this indicator has been mixed and current projections indicate poorer performance in this indicator than in previous years, though this may be due to the small numbers involved. In 4 out of the 13 dwelling fires where the smoke alarm did not activate in Quarter 2, the smoke alarm did not activate as the battery was missing. Nationally, we were in the top performing quartile in 2006/07 based on draft data available.

BVPI 209ii Percentage of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm fitted but did not activate



15. The levels of satisfaction indicated on the triennial public opinion survey was lower than expected, and is the subject of a separate agenda item for this meeting.

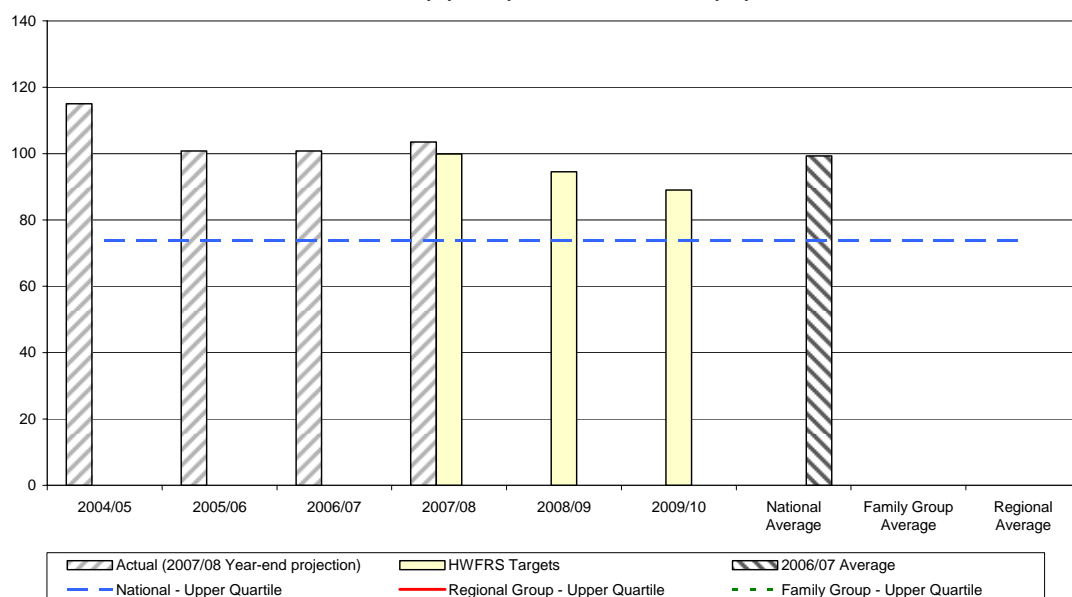
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Business Processes

16. These indicators evaluate how successful our business processes are and measure our prevention work through the number of deliberate fires, malicious calls, and false alarms.
17. Following Quarter 2, we project that we will achieve the targets set for the four BVPIs concerning deliberate fires attended, the two indicators concerning malicious calls and the indicator regarding the number of fires confined to room of origin. We are currently estimated to miss the target for automatic false alarms attended (BVPI 149i), although we are projecting that we will meet the targets for BVPI 149ii and 149iii concerning multiple actuations. The table below shows the projected estimate for BVPI 149i for the year compared with the internal target set for the indicator:

Business Processes			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 149i - Number of False alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment per 1,000 non-domestic properties	99.9 (2464 alarms)	104.8 (2586 alarms)	The Service attended 701 automatic false alarms in Q2 2007/08 compared with 592 in the last quarter and 835 in Q2 2006/07. So far from April 2007, 710 of the 1293 were single actuations at a property and 583 were to properties with more than one actuation within the period. It is currently estimated that we will miss the annual target of 99.9 or 2464 false alarms for the year and projected estimates indicate poorer performance than in 2006/07. The direction of travel has been mixed with slightly improved performance in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05 and poorer performance in 2006/07 which is reflected in the draft national data for 2006/07 which places the Service below average.

BVPI 149i Number of Automatic Fire Alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment per 1,000 non-domestic properties

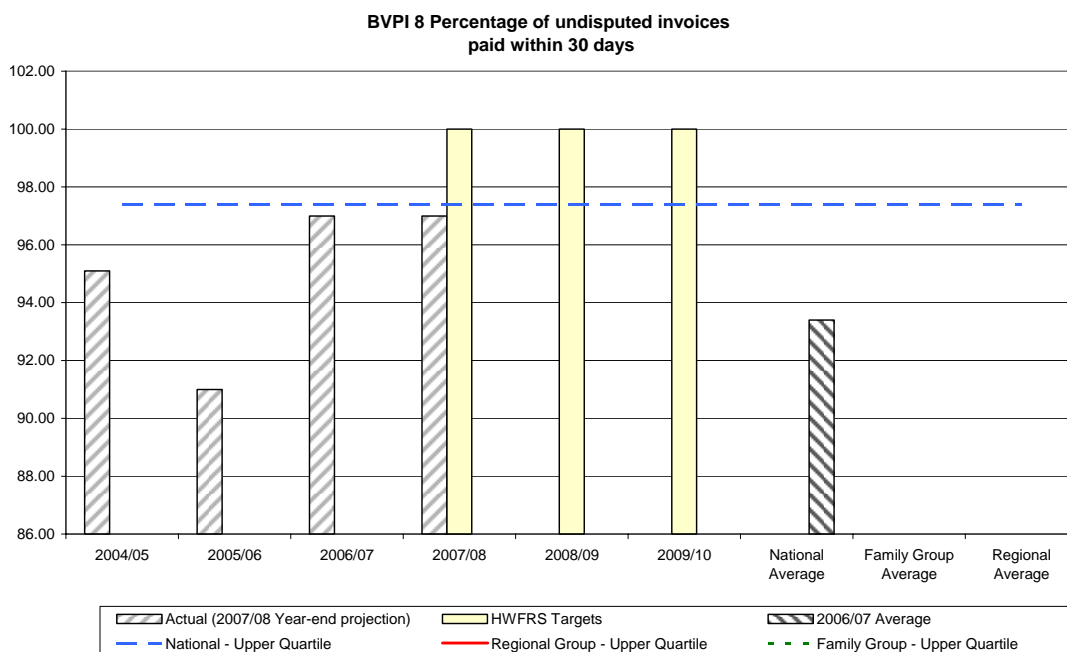


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Finance and Resources

18. These indicators evaluate how we appear to those who provide our financial resources including indicators regarding sickness, ill health retirements, invoices and expenditure. We are expecting to achieve internal targets developed in all of these indicators, except for invoices.
19. Although our current estimate for the year matches the percentage per on time last year for the number of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days, we have set a stretched target of 100% in respect of this indicator and therefore are predicting to miss the target. The table and graph below shows the projected estimate for the year compared with the internal target set for the indicator:

Finance and Resources			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 8 – Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	100%	97%	In Quarter 2 2007/08, 1279 out of 1353 invoices were paid within 30 days or 94.5%. This can be compared with the last quarter where 1719 out of 1738 invoices were paid within 30 days (98.9%) and Quarter 2 2006/07 where 1904 out of 1981 invoices or 96.11% were paid on time. The annual estimate for 2007/08 matches the performance in 2006/07. The direction of travel was adversely affected by the poorer performance in this indicator in 2005/06. In 2006/07 we were in the above average quartile, based on draft national data made available.

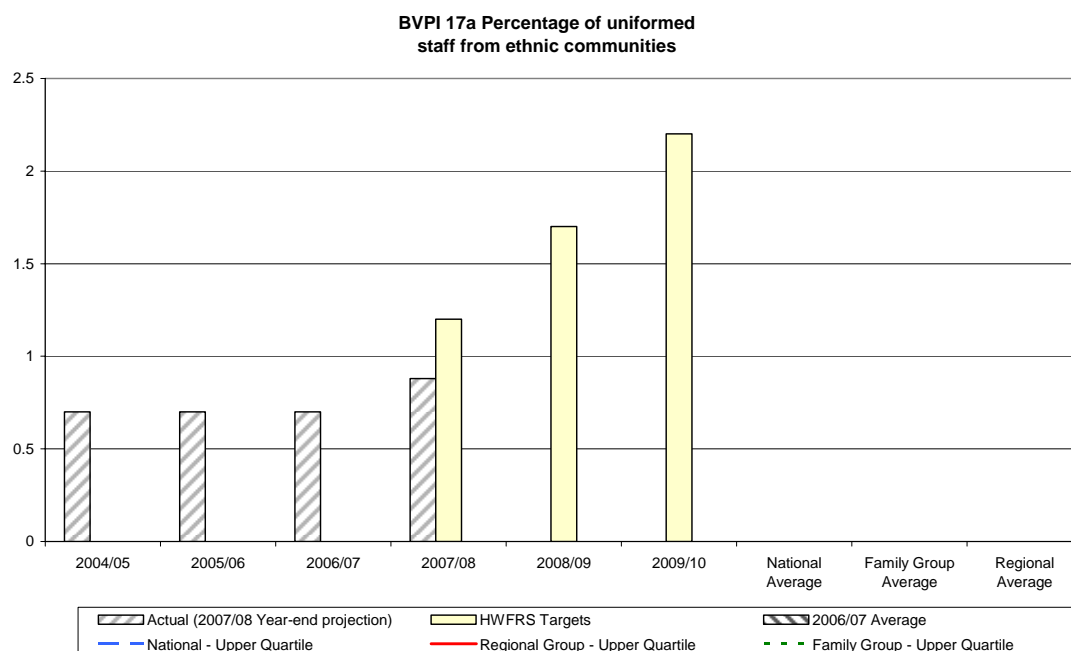


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People

20. These indicators measure how we can sustain our ability to learn and improve and broadly cover equality and health and safety issues within the Fire Service. We are expecting to achieve internal targets developed in all of these indicators except for the percentage of staff from black and minority ethnic communities and our representation of people from black and minority ethnic communities or who are disabled within the top 5% of earners.
21. The Service remains committed to promoting a diverse workforce and have set a stretched target of 1.2% representation amongst our uniformed staff. We are currently projecting a percentage of 0.7% for the end of the year which will miss the stretched internal target. The table and graph below shows the projected estimate for the year compared with the internal target set for the indicator:

People			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 17a – Percentage of uniformed staff from black and minority ethnic communities	1.2%	0.7%	The actual number of staff from black and minority ethnic communities has remained at 6 at the end of Quarter 2 2007/08. The direction of travel for this indicator has remained static. National data is not available for 2006/07 and it is perhaps more appropriate to compare the percentage of staff with the overall percentage of people from ethnic minorities within the Fire and Rescue Service's area. This percentage of 2.2% is published as BVPI 17b.

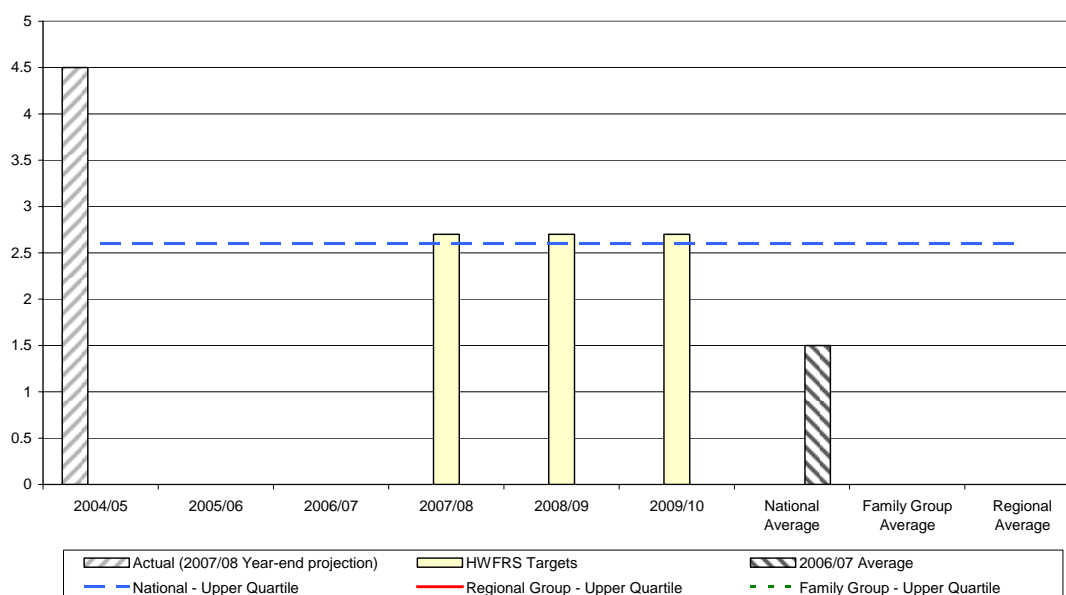


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22. We have also set a stretched internal target of 2.7% representation of black and minority ethnic staff and disabled staff amongst the top 5% of earners within the Service. We are currently projecting a nil percentage at the end of the year based on the current structure. The tables and graphs below show the projected estimates for the year compared with the internal targets set for these indicators:

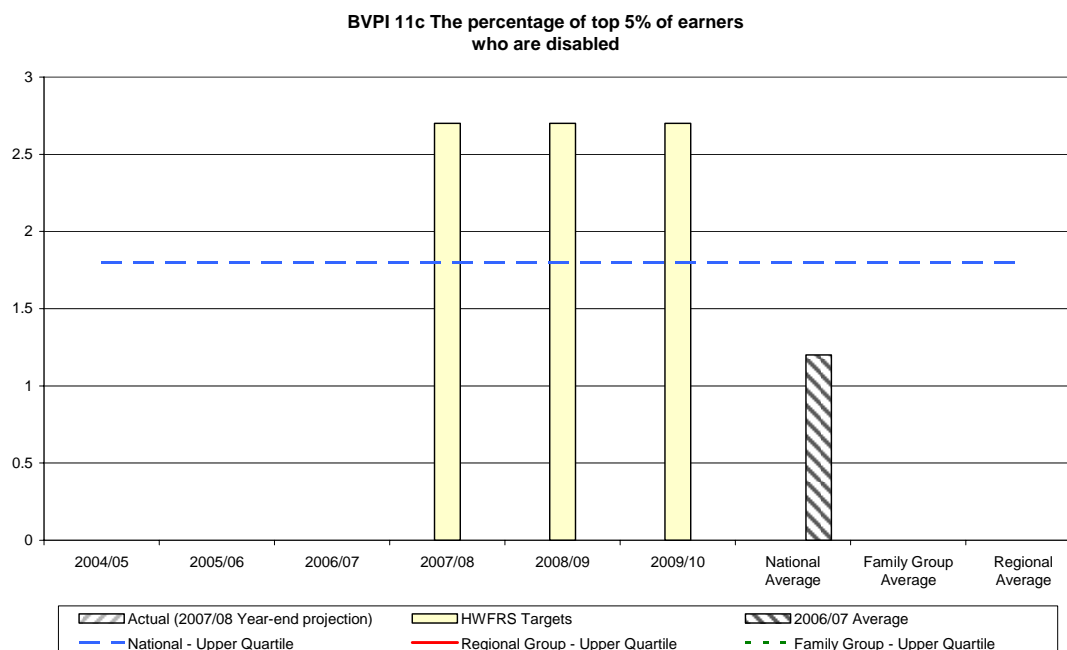
People			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 11b – Percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities	2.7%	0.0%	At present, we do not have any members of staff from black and ethnic minority communities in the top 5% of earners. The overall percentage of top 5% of earners fluctuates due to changes in the overall establishment level. The direction of travel is static in this area. Nationally, we are average performers in this indicator based on 2006/07 draft data.

BVPI 11b The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities



People			
BVPI	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Projection	Comments
BVPI 11c – Percentage of top 5% of earners who are disabled	2.7%	0.0%	At present, we do not have any disabled members of staff in the top 5% of earners. The overall percentage of top 5% of earners fluctuates due to changes in the overall establishment level. The direction of travel is static in this area. Nationally, we are average performers in this indicator based on 2006/07 draft data.

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Corporate Objective Update Quarter 2 2007- 08

Introduction

23. This section reviews progress made towards the objectives laid down within the Corporate Plan.

Corporate Plan Objectives

24. Overall progress against our corporate plan remains rated as green with the majority of objectives being delivered to plan.
25. Two Corporate Objectives are currently rated as red.
26. The project to enhance the Service's existing data mirror to increase resilience and ensure business continuity was due to commence in August. This has been delayed awaiting capital funding approval from Principal Management Members (PMM).
27. The project to ensure a fully operational USAR team is currently on red status. Full report provided in the Programme Management Office (PMO) report (Page 12).

Corporate Project Update Quarter 2 2007- 08

Introduction

28. This section provides a review of the performance in respect of achieving Corporate Projects against the agreed deadlines and budgets.

Progress during Quarter 2 2007/08

29. A traffic light system has been introduced to indicate project performance and potential risk impacts.
- **Risk Traffic Light:** If the project is at risk of not delivering on time, to budget and quality.
 - **Overall Traffic Light:** Indicates if the overall project is on track or not.

Community

30. The Community related projects are progressing well; with the exception of projects highlighted below. Any projects with an Amber traffic light are being monitored to ensure they remain on track.

Community			
Project Name	Risk Traffic Light	Overall Traffic Light	Issue and Risks
USAR	RED	RED	The site works and training building contract is running 16 weeks behind schedule, a revised date completion date is 08/08/08. As a result a paper was submitted to PMM on 16 October to agree the way forward.

Finance and Resources

31. The New Finance System was successfully implemented during quarter 2, on time and within budget.
32. The remaining Finance and Resource related projects are progressing well; any projects with an Amber Risk are being monitored to ensure they remain on track.

Business Processes

33. The Business Process related projects are progressing well; any projects with an Amber Risk are being monitored to ensure they remain on track.

People

34. The People related projects are progressing well.

Background papers

None

6. FLOODING UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. To propose terms of reference for the Best Value Policy and Performance (BVPP) Committee review of the Fire Authority's contribution during the recent major flooding events.
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Background

2. Following the summer flooding events the Fire and Rescue Authority has requested scrutiny of the Authority's involvement in these incidents. This scrutiny is to be carried out by the BVPP Committee. This paper proposes terms of reference for this review and also provides a summary of an initial assessment of our activity as reported to the Principal Manager's Meeting (PMM).

Proposed Terms of Reference

3. To examine the Fire Authority's contribution to flooding events that impacted communities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire in June and July 2007. In particular to explore:
 - The emergency response made by Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
 - The contribution made by the specialist rescue teams provided through local investment decisions made by the Authority
 - The effectiveness of local multi-agency preplanning through the Local Resilience Forum
 - The effectiveness of the multi-agency response and joint working between Local Resilience Forum members
 - The effectiveness of regional and national support and mutual aid during the response phase.
 - The effectiveness of multi-agency working arrangements and communication with the public during the recovery phase

Report of Initial Assessment into the Service Response

Debrief Process

4. The debrief process was carried out in three main areas: Operational, Tactical Command and Strategic Command. In addition there were several inter-agency reviews that were also covered. The command review was based upon a structured debrief process facilitated by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Assessment of Risk

5. The initial operational findings have been assessed by the operations department and have been distributed to appropriate managers for comment or action. The remainder will be assessed by a team of managers using the standard template. However, a number of issues would appear to require initial consideration and these are highlighted below.

Initial Action

6. The following describes the areas that senior managers are giving early consideration to. Any remedial action will be included within the Service planning process; however, it is fair to say at this point that there are likely to be budgetary implications for the Authority to consider.

Operational

- How we prioritise calls for immediate attendance
- How we mobilise to flood related incidents including specialist rescue assets
- How we communicate with other agencies especially with air support (Helicopters)
- How we use the radios in busy periods
- How we provide personal protective equipment to all staff
- How we integrate specialist boat command with mobilising officer
- How we use 'recall to duty' to provide resilience during spate conditions
- How we provide welfare arrangements in Fire Control during spate conditions
- How we train and equip the Specialist Rescue Teams (SRT)
- How we manage the incident command system during a major flood event
- How we use intelligence to initiate special management arrangements for major floods
- How we pre-deploy specialist rescue assets based on intelligence

Tactical

- How we specify the roles and responsibilities within the command room
- How we communicate and keep records in the command room including the risk assessment protocol
- How we work with partners to develop a system with partners for holding pre-emptive Silver Control meetings as soon as warnings are received
- How we build resilience for staff managing a major incident over a long period of time
- How we provide a written flood management procedure

Strategic

- How we use the criteria for declaring a major emergency

- How we clarify roles and responsibilities at 'Gold' level
- How we finalise the Incident Command System (ICS)

Next Steps

7. The next stage is for the completion of the review, there are still a number of reports to come in from internal departments and external partners. Where these result in areas for improvement they will be assessed against organisational risk and appropriate action plans developed for delivery in accordance with that risk score.

Recommendation

- **That the Committee approves the terms of reference for the review**
- **That the Committee notes the content of the initial debrief findings**

Background Papers

None

7. CUSTOMER SURVEYS 2006/07 – SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an overview analysis of Customer Surveys carried out during 2006/07.
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Introduction

2. During 2006/07, Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to carry out surveys focusing on the views of the public regarding:
 - the performance of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and the level of fire safety awareness among the public.
 - the views of those who experienced incidents attended by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
 - the views of those who had received a Fire Safety Audit/Inspection from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

Performance Results

Overall Satisfaction Rates

3. The table below shows trend data for the overall satisfaction rates.

	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Public Survey - Overall Satisfaction	75%	-	-	70%	-	-	64% (New BVPI 3 Fire wording)
After the Incident - Overall Satisfaction	-	-	100%	99%	99%	100%	99% Home 98% Non-Domestic
Fire Safety Audit/Inspection - Overall Satisfaction	-	-	99%	98%	98%	99%	95%

- Overall satisfaction rates have stayed approximately the same over the last few years but appear to have dropped slightly in the last year (2006/07).

Public Survey (BVPI 3) 2006/07 - National Fire Authority Results

- HWFRS are well above the national average and are just below the top quartile (as shown at Appendix 1). Taking our Confidence Interval into account (64% +/- 2.59%), our 'true' percentage may even put us in the top quartile.

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- We are the joint highest ranking Fire and Rescue Service in our Region and Family Group apart from West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service.
- No Fire and Rescue Service has an improving trend over the three surveys. Out of the 21 Fire and Rescue Services who have a full data set, only Dorset has seen an increase with the latest 2006/07 survey. But this is still significantly less than their 2000/01 figure.
- Merseyside appear to have the best results over the three surveys although their latest results have dropped slightly.

Areas of Good Performance

- The majority of people have positive perceptions of HWFRS and of those who contacted the Service in the past 12 months, most were happy with the response received.
- Almost two-thirds of people recalled seeing or hearing fire safety messages in the past 12 months.
- Almost 100% of people recalling fire safety messages understood the content and understood what they had to do to improve their safety from fire. 90% of these reported that the messages influenced them to change the fire safety measures in their homes or that they were already in place.
- Almost a third of people have improved fire safety in their homes in the past 12 months – mostly by installing smoke alarms, closing internal doors at night and turning off/removing plugs at night.
- From all of the indicators in the Public Survey, HWFRS performed best compared to other Fire and Rescue Services on those indicators relating to fire safety in the home.
- From the After the Incident Survey, the majority of respondents (98%) who reported the incident themselves were satisfied with the service they received during initial contact. HWFRS ranks well with other Fire and Rescue Services for initial contact for incidents in the home.
- For non-domestic incidents, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service ranks well with other Fire and Rescue Services on speed of response.
- Respondents were extremely positive about the Firefighters who attended the scene.
- From the Fire Safety Audit/Inspection Benchmarking Survey, the conduct of the Fire Safety Officers from all Fire and Rescue Services was consistently good. HWFRS ranks well (3rd) on the indicator relating to keeping the appointment.

Areas for Improvement

- Some people do not feel well informed about how HWFRS spends its money or how well it does.
- Almost 1 in 5 people take none of the fire precautions highlighted in the survey in their home. There's been a decrease in the number of homes

with planned escape routes and decreases in the number of homes with fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

- The overall provision of information and advice appears low but where it was provided respondents found it useful and adopted the advice. This is the same for most other Fire and Rescue Services.
- From the Fire Safety Audit/Inspection Benchmarking Survey, Fire and Rescue Services seem to perform worst for indicators relating to meeting expectations and also seem to perform less well on the indicator relating to actions required.
- HWFRS seem to rank poorly compared to other Fire and Rescue Services in the 'Quality of Service Survey: Fire Safety Audit/Inspection' for indicators relating to informing areas of concern and discussing the results of the audit. Further research on our individual results for this area will be conducted by Community Fire Safety alongside other related surveys such as the Public Survey, After the Incident Survey, Home Fire Safety Checks Survey and the Education/Schools Visits Survey. Improvement actions will then be built into future plans and used as evidence for forthcoming audits such as Charter Mark.

Performance Analysis

Summary Analysis

- For the Public Survey, our overall satisfaction rate seems to be decreasing and we have missed our target. However, 95% of respondents had not used HWFRA services in the last 12 months and so many opinions may be based on perceptions and not on recent experience of the Service.
- We are still significantly higher than the national satisfaction rate for which the trend is also downwards.
- This may be due to rising public expectations when comparing public sector service with private sector service as evidenced by recent Cabinet Office/Charter Mark research.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

Background Papers

Public Opinion Survey 2006 (BVPI 3)

After the Incident 2006/07 – HWFRS Report

After the Incident 2006/07 – Benchmarking Report

Fire Safety Audit 2006/07 – Benchmarking Report

