

Agenda

Councillors

Herefordshire:

Mrs E M Bew, Mr G W Davis (Chairman), Mr K G Grumbley, Brigadier P Jones, Mr R Preece, Mr D C Taylor.

Worcestershire:

Mr T J Bean (Vice-Chairman), Mr M H Clarke, Mr S J Clee, Mrs M L Drinkwater, Mrs D E Dudley, Mr R J Farmer, Mr A Fry, Mrs D Hamilton-Jones, Mr A I Hardman, Mr J Holden, Mr P T Mills, Mr P A Mould, Mr M M G Oborski, Mrs B Passingham, Mr D W Prodger, Mr C T Smith, Mr R M Udall, Mr J R Webb, Mr G C Yarranton.

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Chairman

To elect a Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

(The convention is that, subject to the requirement for annual election, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be from a different Constituent Authority from the other with positions alternating between the two Authorities at two-yearly intervals. Under the convention it therefore falls to a Member appointed by Herefordshire Council to hold the Chair for the forthcoming year).

3. Vice-Chairman

To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

4. Declaration of Interests (if any)

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

5. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on Wednesday 15 February 2006.

6. Questions from Members of the Public

To receive questions previously submitted by members of the public more than five clear working days before the meeting of the Authority.

7. Appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer (p.1)

To confirm the appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

8. Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies (p.3-10)

To consider the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups and to authorise the Clerk following consultation with Group Leaders to make appointments to Committees and other bodies.

9. Service Report (p.11-28)

To inform Members of Service activities in the forth quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 January 2006 to 31 March 2006.

10. Provisional Budget Out-turn 2005/06 (p.29-36)

To consider the Revenue and Capital budget out-turns for 2005/06.

11. Strategic Service Planning Process (p.37-50)

To provide an update on the proposed arrangements to re-align the Strategic Service Planning Process.

12. Corporate Plan 2006/07 (p.51-52)

To seek approval of the Authority's Corporate Plan 2006/07.

13. IRMP Progress Update (p.53-56)

To provide a progress report on the IRMP action plan for 2006/07.

14. Draft 2007 – 2008 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Annual Action Plan (p.57-58)

To seek Members' approval of the Fire and Rescue Authority's draft 2007 – 2008 IRMP Annual Action Plan for consultation.

15. Governance Of Regional Fire Control Centres Consultation Response (p.59-62)

To seek Members' approval for the Authority's response to consultation on governance arrangements for Fire and Rescue Service Regional Control Centres.

16. Ethical Framework (p.63-76)

To consider a proposed Ethical Framework.

17. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework (p.77-96)

To note the updated Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for 2006/08.

18. Review of Code of Corporate Governance (p.97-118)

To consider updates to the Code of Corporate Governance.

19. Corporate Services Update (p.119-122)

To provide an update on the progress within Corporate Services for the Management of Risk and Business Continuity Management, Asset Management and the ICT Strategy within the Authority.

20. Annual Report of The Standards Committee (p.123-128)

To receive the annual report from the Authority's Standards Committee.

21. Community Events (p.129-30)

To note Community Events for the year ahead.

(A glossary of abbreviations and terms used in these agenda papers is to be found at the end of this document.)

**Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority
Wednesday 15 February, 2006 Headquarters, 2 Kings Court,
Charles Hastings Way, Worcester (10.30 am)**

Minutes

Present

Herefordshire:

Mr GW Davis (Chairman), Brigadier P Jones, Mr R. Preece, Mr DC Taylor.

Worcestershire: Mr TJ Bean, Mr SJ Clee, Mrs M.L. Drinkwater, Mrs DE Dudley, Mr RJ Farmer, Mr A Fry, Mr A I Hardman, Mr P A Mould, Mrs B Passingham, Mr DW Prodger, Mr CT Smith, Mr RM Udall, Mr JR Webb, Mr GC Yarranton.

Available Papers:

- A. The agenda paper and appendices referred to (previously circulated).
- B. The minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 15 December, 2005 (previously circulated).
- C. (Urgent Item) Appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer (circulated at the meeting)

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

495. (Agenda item 1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs EM Bew, Mr KG Grumbley and Mr J Holden.

496. (Agenda item 2) Declarations of Interest

Mr PA Mould advised the Authority that if the Firefighters Pension Scheme was discussed in such detail that it affected his personal position, he would declare a personal and a prejudicial interest. (That proving not to be the case, there was no need for Mr Mould to leave the room during the meeting.)

497. (Agenda item 3) Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December, 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

498. (Agenda Item 4) Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the Public.

499. (Urgent Item) Appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer

In accordance with Section 100B 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman agreed to allow consideration of this item as a matter of urgency in order to ensure that the Authority could expedite its business.

Further to Minute number 461 the Authority was invited to confirm the appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

The report described the circumstances which had led to a vacancy in the office of Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority. It proposed the reinstatement of the Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council as Clerk to ensure that the Authority could conduct its business, with a view to the position being regularised at the Authority's next meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the reinstatement of Mr NM Pringle Herefordshire Council's Chief Executive as Clerk/Monitoring Officer be confirmed with immediate effect; and**
- (b) that a further report be brought to the Authority's annual meeting to regularise the position.**

500. (Agenda Item 5) Integrated Risk Management Plan 2006-2009 and Third Annual Action Plan - Response To Consultation

Further to Minute number 475 the Authority was informed of the comments and replies received from stakeholders during the consultation on the Authority's Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2006-2009 and Third Annual Action Plan and asked to approve the amended Plans.

The IRMP itself had been circulated separately to Members together with a document summarising the responses to the consultation exercise.

The Chief Fire Officer emphasised that careful consideration had been given to the responses to the consultation undertaken on the draft Plan, approved by the Authority in September 2005, and a number of amendments had been made as a consequence. He highlighted the 2006/07 Action Plan as set out at Appendix 1 to the Plan.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained the extensive nature of the consultation exercise, which had been undertaken in line with best practice, and described some of the key amendments made in response to the replies which had been received. These included piloting new work patterns at Redditch and Kidderminster Fire Stations, putting on hold the introduction of day staffed appliances at Redditch and Kidderminster; putting on hold the disestablishment of the third appliance at Redditch, revisiting the proposed relocation of Bromsgrove Fire Station, amending the minimum number of Flexible Duty Officers on the minimum incident command rota; and including specific reference to how the implications of the Regional Fire Control project would be addressed.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- Some concern was expressed about the amendment to the Plan involving piloting new work patterns, rather than introducing day staffed fire engines as originally proposed. It was suggested that whilst this might be a cheaper option there had to be some doubt as to whether it would work. It was proposed that a report should be made to the Authority in September assessing the effectiveness of these arrangements.

The Chief Fire Officer replied that he shared some of the concerns expressed about the arrangements to be piloted in Redditch. However, firefighters had been enthusiastic about exploring new work patterns. He was therefore willing to support a pilot exercise and ensure its resilience. He agreed that a review of arrangements in September would be sensible. He added that the original day staffing proposals themselves would need to be reviewed if it was eventually decided that that approach needed to be pursued instead.

- As the disestablishment of the third fire engine at Redditch, which had virtually been at the end of its operational life, was now to be put on hold it was asked whether it would be replaced with a newer appliance.

The Chief Fire Officer said that no additional change would be made pending the outcome of the pilot scheme.

- The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that Retained Firefighters participating in the pilot scheme at Redditch would work normal duties and would benefit from the opportunity to have more training time and participate in Community Safety work.
- Regarding proposals for new Fire Stations it was noted that there had been no specific comment in response to the consultation exercise on the location of new Fire Stations in Worcester. This was perhaps not surprising as the Property Strategy had a 10 year timeframe whereas the IRMP covered a three year period and no firm proposal for Worcester had been included in the IRMP this time. It was reiterated that all proposed relocations of fire stations would be the subject of consultation exercises and a business case for any firm proposals would be submitted to the Authority. A request that the Authority should continue to liaise closely with Redditch Borough Council over relocation options was noted.
- That further consideration should be given to Member involvement in future consultation exercises.
- That it would be helpful to Members when Plans and Strategies were produced if changes to documents previously considered by Members could be highlighted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Fire and Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2006-2009 and Third Annual Action Plan be approved;**

- (b) that a report be made to the Authority in September 2006, evaluating the effectiveness of the new work patterns to be piloted; and**
- (c) that when Plans and similar documents were produced consideration should be given to how to highlight to Members changes to documents which they had previously considered.**

501 (Agenda Item 6) Budget and Precept for 2006/07

The Authority was asked to determine Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2006/07 and the consequential Council Tax Precept.

The Treasurer presented the report in detail. He noted that the Authority had approved the Integrated Risk Management Plan and that to meet the requirements of that Plan a core budget of £27.159 million had been identified. Adjusting for repayment of Transitional Grant and a planned transfer to balances this meant a Net Budget Requirement of £27.061 million. This represented a 4.6% increase on the adjusted 2005/06 budget requirement and a 5.3% increase on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's notional figure. He explained the variations which accounted for the 4.6% increase, referring to the detailed description set out in appendices 1-3 of the report.

He then discussed the Capital Programme as set out in appendix 5 to the report noting that a business case for proposed schemes would have to be made and to that extent the programme was indicative.

He commented on the Authority's performance in achieving efficiency gains in excess of the national target.

He then explained the position on the Medium Term Financial Strategy noting the forecasts and impact on the precept as set out in appendices 7 and 9 of the report and that the Strategy provided for the Authority to move forward in a measured way. He also reported that beyond 2007/08, for various reasons outside the Authority's control, the forecasts became more speculative.

He then described the budget risks as set out in the report.

In relation to the 2006/07 grant position he drew attention to the effects of the "damping" mechanism the Government had put in place to smooth the effects of the introduction of new formula grant arrangements. This resulted in the Authority receiving £0.442 million (4.2%) less than it was entitled to on the basis of the formula grant calculation. The Authority now received the lowest government grant per citizen of any Fire and Rescue Authority and received only 75% of the average for precepting shire Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The impact of this was that, as detailed in appendix 8 to the report, the precept requirement resulted in a Band D tax of £61.95 per annum, an increase of 4.9% on 2005/06.

He discussed the intention to increase balances to 4% of the budget under the five year life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, considering this a prudent course for an emergency service.

He also noted the revised prudential code indicators as set out in appendix 10 to the report.

Having referred the Authority to his personal assurance statement on the robustness of the budget calculations he summed up by saying that the budget allowed for progress in the forthcoming year to deliver an improving service making efficient use of resources. The Medium Term Financial Strategy demonstrated the extent to which the Authority was also carefully planning for the future.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- The potential costs to the Authority of the Regional Fire Control and Fire-link were discussed. It was explained why, because of the uncertainty over what the costs might be, that the costs had to be identified as a budget risk. However, it was recognised that some Authorities might find that the new arrangements were cheaper than their existing arrangements, whereas others might find them more expensive. It was not known at this stage into which category the Authority would fall.
- In response to questions the Treasurer commented in more detail on the planned incremental approach to increasing balances over the medium term. He also explained the fluctuations in the pattern of predicted capital expenditure, noting the extent to which this was dependent on the schemes the Authority wished to pursue and their timing.
- That whilst the capping of the 2004/05 budget had meant that the Authority had not made as much progress as it would have liked, the 2006/07 budget did allow the Authority to implement its main priorities in the IRMP and was therefore to be welcomed.
- It was suggested that the changes to the firefighters pension scheme were unfair in that they did not offer the same protection to existing firefighters as was being offered to other emergency services workers under their revised schemes. It was therefore proposed that representation should be made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister registering the Authority's concern. Although representations had already been made by the West Midlands Regional Management Board there seemed no reason why the Authority should not also express its view.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Revenue Budget, Net Budget Requirement and consequential precept as set out in Appendix 8 to the report be approved;**
- (b) that the Capital Budget and Programme as set out at Appendix 5 to the report be approved;**
- (c) the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in Appendix 7 and 9 to the report be approved;**
- (d) the Statement of Prudential Code Indicators as set out at Appendix 10 to the report be approved; and**

- (e) representation be made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister registering concern about aspects of the proposals for the firefighters pension scheme.**

502. (Agenda Item 7) Service Restructure

The Authority was informed of proposals for a Service restructure and asked to approve their introduction.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the changes needed to deliver the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), address issues raised by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and respond to other organisational issues required a Service restructure.

The proposed changes were set out in the report. The Chief Fire Officer noted that there would be a consultation process and that he proposed to develop a change management plan following consultation with Group Leaders. He confirmed that the proposals would be achieved within the budget set by the Authority and would take about 18 months to implement. He proposed to keep the Authority informed of progress.

Members noted that the proposals flowed from the IRMP and were affordable within the budget.

RESOLVED: that:

- (a) the outline proposals for restructure as set out in the report be approved;**
- (b) the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive develop detailed change plans following consultation with Group Leaders;**
- (c) the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive be authorised to deliver the changes outlined in line with the plan; and**
- (d) progress on delivery of these proposals be regularly reported to the Authority.**

503. (Agenda Item 8) Service Report

The Authority was informed of Service activities in the last quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 October 2005 to 31 December 2005.

The Chief Fire Officer commented briefly on each section of the report. He noted in particular: the reduction in fires compared with the last quarter and the overall reduction in the total number of incidents, although the number of false fire alarms continued to be a concern; that an audience of 2,136 had been reached through school visits; the reduction in the number of reportable accidents; and the latest position on the new Urban Search and Rescue Team and the Regional Fire Control Centre project.

He drew attention to the Minutes of the meeting of the West Midlands Regional Management Board in January, 2006 which had been circulated separately to Members.

It was also reported that initial feedback from the Service's recent Charter Mark surveillance visit was very positive and a report would be made to the Authority's next meeting.

The Chief Fire Officer then drew Members' attention to a forthcoming documentary on the return to restricted operational duties of firefighter Simon Hawkins following a severe injury. He paid tribute to the efforts made by Mr Hawkins, and the support provided by his colleagues, to enable him to resume an operational role. In welcoming Mr Hawkins return to work he added that it was important to assure the Authority that a careful risk assessment had been made to ensure the safety and security of the community, Mr Hawkins himself and his colleagues. He noted that the matter was likely to be of interest to Fire and Rescue Authorities across the Country.

The Authority requested that its support for Mr Hawkins be conveyed to him.

A Member asked whether any recommendations had been made to the landlords as a consequence of an incident, described in the report, at the high rise flats in Henwick House, St John's Worcester. In reply it was stated that fire safety in high rise buildings had a prominent national profile following some recent incidents and national guidance on high rise buildings, for owners, planners, fire authorities and residents had recently been issued. The Service was undertaking a review and the intention was to engage directly with relevant parties in due course.

504. (Agenda Item 9) Members' Visits Programme

The Authority considered a programme of visits to Stations and Departments.

The report outlined the purpose of the proposed visits by small groups of Members, detailed a draft programme and included a pro forma for feeding back findings from the visits.

Some reservations were expressed about the travelling distances the proposed programme involved for some Members. Whilst it was important that all Members participated in the visits, it was suggested that there should be flexibility for Members to swap between the visiting groups if they wished. It was also requested that maps and directions should be issued.

The Chief Fire Officer requested that Members notify him of any changes to the composition of visiting groups.

RESOLVED: that arrangements for a programme of Members' visits be approved in principle, with the composition of the visiting groups to be finalised in consultation with individual Members.

505. (Agenda Item 10 Members' Training Programme 2006/07

The Authority received an update on the Training Programme for 2006/07 which had been developed to improve the support available to Members in undertaking their duties.

An updated programme was circulated at the meeting.

506. (Agenda Item 11) Fire Station Community Events

The Authority was informed of the development of a broader range of fire station community events.

It was noted that details of the planned events would be circulated separately.

507. (Agenda Item 12) Revised Committee Structure

The Authority considered revisions to the Committee Structure.

The report stated that in pursuit of an “excellent” rating in the next round of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Process it would be best practice for the Authority to separate the audit function from any involvement in approving budgets. It was therefore proposed to allocate the functions of the Audit and Budget Committee to two separate Committees.

Paragraph 8 of the report set out proposed terms of reference for an Audit Committee. Paragraph 9 of the Report set out the proposed terms of reference of the Budget Committee. The report also set out some proposed restrictions on the membership of the Audit Committee.

It was proposed that further work should be undertaken with Group Leaders to refine the proposals and noted that the appointment of the Chairmen of the two Committees would require further formal consideration.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) an Audit Committee be established with Terms of Reference as at paragraph 9 of the report;**
- (b) a Budget Committee be established with Terms of Reference as at paragraph 8 of the report;**
- (c) the Clerk be authorised following consultation with Group Leaders to take any necessary action to give effect to proportionality requirements, determine the number of seats on the Audit Committee and any corresponding changes to the Budget Committee, and make appointments to those Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders; and**
- (d) the appointment of the Chairmen of the Audit Committee and of the Budget Committee be determined either at the Authority’s next meeting or at the first meeting of either Committee should one be held before then.**

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm

Chairman.....

7. APPOINTMENT OF CLERK/MONITORING OFFICER

Purpose of Report

1. To confirm the appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority.
-

Background

2. Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Authority is required to make an appointment to the statutory position of Monitoring Officer.
3. In February the Authority reinstated Mr N.M. Pringle Herefordshire Council's Chief Executive as its Clerk/Monitoring Officer, following the departure of the Legal Advisor and Monitoring Officer for Herefordshire Council whom, at Mr Pringle's suggestion, the Authority had appointed as Clerk in June 2005. It was suggested to the Authority that this was an interim measure due to the transitional period in Herefordshire Council appointing a new Legal Advisor proving slightly longer than expected. The Authority agreed that the matter should be regularised at its next meeting, noting that by that time an appointment by Herefordshire Council would have been made.
5. Mr Alan McLaughlin has now taken up the post of Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer at Herefordshire Council and it is proposed that he be appointed as the Authority's Clerk/Monitoring Officer.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive recommends that the Authority confirm the appointment of Mr A.J. McLaughlin, Herefordshire Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer as Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority with immediate effect.

Background Papers

None

8. ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

Purpose of report

1. To consider the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups and to authorise the Clerk following consultation with Group Leaders to make appointments to Committees and other bodies.
-

Background

2. In accordance with the Hereford and Worcester Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 the Authority's membership comprises 25 Councillors, 19 from Worcestershire County Council and 6 from Herefordshire Council.
3. The Membership is as set out on the Agenda paper. Both Herefordshire Council's appointments and Worcestershire County Council's appointments were made for the life of their respective Councils. (The Herefordshire Councillors were appointed in May 2003 for a four year term and the Worcestershire County Councillors were appointed in May 2005, also for a four year term.)
4. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that where "a Council" holds an Annual Meeting it shall review the allocation of seats to political groups either at that meeting or as soon as practical thereafter. It is therefore necessary to confirm the appointments to Committees. It is proposed that the Clerk be authorised to take any necessary action to give effect to the requirement that seats be allocated on the basis of political proportionality.
5. The Authority has established the following Committees:
 - Urgent Decisions Committee (11 Seats)
 - Appointments Committee (11 seats)
 - Audit Committee (5) seats
 - Best Value Policy and Performance Committee (5 seats)
 - Budget Committee (11 seats)
6. The Authority has generally appointed the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of these Committees at its annual meeting.
7. The Authority has also appointed a Standards Committee comprising five independent persons, (Mr C Emeny, Mr R Gething, Dr M Mylechreest, Mr R Rogers and Mr D Stevens); and two Members of the Authority: Mr RJ Farmer and Mr R Preece, each of whom it was agreed should have a named substitute. The Standards Committee elects its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Authority agreed that one of the Independent Members should take the chair of the Standards Committee with another Independent Member being appointed Vice-Chairman, with the chair

alternating each year between a Herefordshire based Independent Member and a Worcestershire based Independent Member. (In this context an Independent Member is a person who is not a member or an officer of that or any other relevant authority.)

8. A Members Steering Group has also previously been appointed as an informal advisory body to work with officers on the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
9. The terms of reference of the Authority's Committees and current Membership are appended

Rules Governing Appointments

10. The Committee agreed in reviewing its Committee Structure in September 2004 that to enhance accountability Group Leaders (who it would be expected would include the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority), or their nominees who had been working on policy development initiatives, should not serve on the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee.
11. The Authority confirmed in June 2005 that Group Leaders, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority, should not serve on the Standards Committee.
12. In appointing the Audit Committee in February 2006, the Authority agreed that Membership of the Audit Committee should exclude the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority, the Chairman of the Authority's predecessor as Chairman and the Chairman of the Budget Committee.

Local Government Association Appointments

13. All Fire and Rescue Authorities are entitled to a place and a vote on the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Service Forum. The Authority needs to determine whether it wishes to confirm its decision on 13 June 2005 that the Chairman or his nominee should hold this place and exercise the vote on behalf of this Authority.
14. This Authority is also in corporate membership of the LGA. The Authority is entitled to appoint up to 4 representatives to serve on the General Assembly. The Association encourages those authorities entitled to 3 or 4 representatives to allocate one of these positions to minority group leaders on their authorities. Arrangements determined by the Authority on 13 June, 2005 allocated places on the General Assembly to the Leaders of the Political Groups on the Authority. The Authority needs to determine if it wishes to confirm its decision on how many places it wishes to take up and how those places should be allocated.

Voting

15. The LGA constitution provides that Authorities in corporate membership shall be entitled to vote only as follows:-
 - a) On the election of a Chair, Vice-Chair and Deputy Chairs and on questions of estimated expenditure and subscriptions each corporate member shall have one vote; and
 - b) On issues of direct relevance to the statutory duties and responsibilities of corporate members of their class (as determined by the Chair of the meeting) each

corporate member shall be entitled to the same number of votes as a unitary authority within their population band (meaning that this Authority has 13 votes).

16. On 13 June 2005 the Authority allocated the corporate vote to the Chairman (or his nominee) and divided the 13 service votes on the basis of proportionality. The Authority needs to determine whether it wishes to adhere to this decision.

West Midlands Regional Management Board

17. In December 2003 the Authority agreed to participate in the establishment of the West Midlands Regional Management Board. The Authority is entitled to make three appointments. The Authority agreed in June 2005 that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Conservative Group Leader should be appointed.
18. The Authority needs to confirm appointments to be made to the Regional Management Board.

Recommendation

The Clerk recommends:

- a) **that the Authority considers appointments to the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority's Committees;**
- b) **that the Clerk be authorised following consultation with Group Leaders to take any necessary action to give effect to proportionality requirements, determine the numbers of seats on Committees and make appointments to those Committees and other bodies in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders;**
- c) **that the Authority determines whether it wishes to adhere to its previous view that representation and voting on the Local Government Association be as follows:**
 - (i) **that the Authority's representatives on the Local Government Association should be the Group Leaders or their nominees;**
 - (ii) **that the 13 Service votes on the Local Government Association Assembly be allocated between its representatives on a politically proportionate basis; and**
 - (iii) **the corporate vote on the Local Government Association Assembly be exercised by the Chairman or his nominee.**
- d) **that the Authority determines whether it wishes to adhere to its previous resolution that the Chairman or his nominee should hold the place and vote available to the Authority on the LGA's Fire Service Forum; and**
- e) **that the appointments to the Regional Management Board be confirmed.**

Background Papers

None

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF COMMITTEES OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

URGENT DECISIONS COMMITTEE

To act on behalf of the Authority in circumstances where the urgency of the matter is such that it cannot await the calling of a meeting of the Authority and there is no other method of dealing with that matter.

APPOINTMENTS ETC COMMITTEE

To deal with the appointment, terms and conditions, suspension or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

To agree the external audit plans

To receive reports from the External Auditors

To monitor and report on the performance of internal audit.

To approve the Statement on Internal Control

To approve the Statutory Accounts.

BEST VALUE, POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

To consider the Best Value Performance Plans and reviews prior to submission to the Authority for approval.

To ensure that service provision has been appropriately determined by following the Government's Best Value performance methodology (Challenge, Consult, Compare, Compete)."

To comment on policy development, review policy (excepting financial policy) and make recommendations

To monitor progress in implementing approved policies and make recommendations

To consider any issue relating to a policy of the Authority, or performance in respect of such a policy, referred to the Committee by any three Members of the Authority, provided that more than one political group is represented in the number.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

To review the financial prospects and make recommendations to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

To have oversight of financial matters raised in external and internal audit arrangements.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Members of the Authority;
- assisting Members to observe the code of conduct;
- advising the Authority on the adoption or revision of the code of conduct;
- monitoring the operation of the code of conduct;
- advising, training or arranging to train the Members of the Authority on matters relating to the code of conduct;
- granting dispensations to Members, in circumstances to be prescribed in Regulations, from requirements relating to interests set out in the councillors' code of conduct;
- dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring officer or any matter which is referred by an ethical standards officer to the Monitoring Officer.

AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Committee	Total Seats	Conservative Group	Labour Group	Liberal Democrat Group	Independent Group
Urgent Decisions	11	5 Mr S Clee (VC) Mrs M Drinkwater Mr K Grumbley Mr A Hardman Mr P Jones	3 Mrs D Dudley Mrs B Passingham Mr M Preece	2 Mr C Smith Mr J Webb (C)	1 Mr G Davis
Appointments etc	11	5 Mr M Clarke Mr S Clee Mr K Grumbley Mr P Jones (C) Mrs D Hamilton- Jones	3 Mr P Mould Mrs B Passingham (VC) Mr R Udall	2 Mr T Bean Mr J Webb	1 Mr G Davis
Audit Committee	5	2	1 Mr P Mills	1 Mr J Webb	1 Mr D Taylor

Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee	5	2 Mrs M Drinkwater (VC) Mr J Holden	1 Mr A Fry (C)	1 Mrs M Bew	1 Mr M Oborski
Budget Committee	11	5 Mr M Clarke Mr A Hardman Mr P Jones Mr D Prodger Mr G Yarranton	3 Mr P Mills Mr P Mould (C) Mr R Udall	2 Mr T Bean (VC) Mr C Smith	1 Mr D Taylor
Standards Committee		<p>2 Councillors to be determined by the Authority on the recommendation of Group Leaders (and named deputies) and 5 Independent persons (Nb The current Independent persons are Mr C Emeny, Mr R Gething, Dr M Mylechreest, Mr R Rogers and Mr D Stevens)</p> <p>Councillor Farmer and Councillor Preece have been recommended by the Group Leaders.</p>			

9. SERVICE REPORT

Purpose of Report

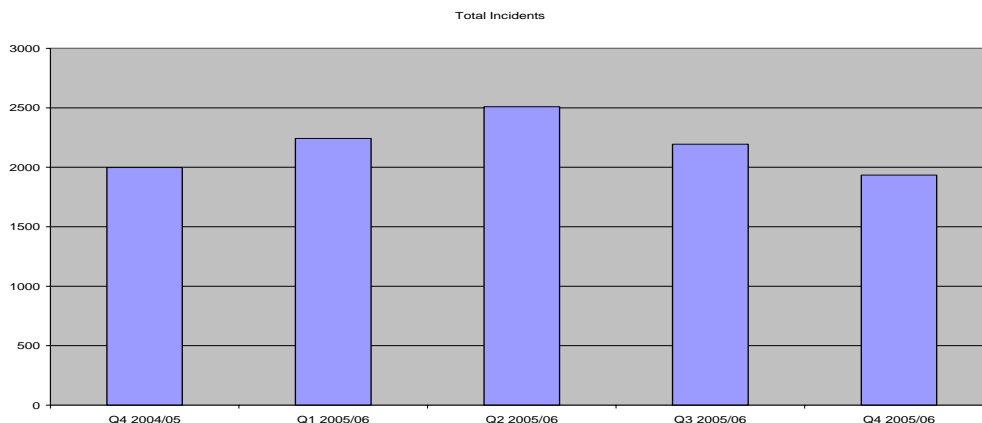
1. To inform Members of Service activities in the fourth quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 01 January 2006 to 31 March 2006.
-

Performance

Operational Statistics

2. Members are requested to note the levels of operational activity experienced for the period 01 January 2006 to 31 March 2006.
3. In comparison with the same quarter last year, although there has been a small increase in fires attended, there have also been reductions in special service incidents and false alarms, contributing to an overall reduction in the total number of incidents.
4. This is the second quarter in a row that the number of total incidents has reduced. The Service will continue to monitor the number of incidents in the forthcoming year.
5. As well as the summary tabulation below, a graphic has been included that demonstrates the profile of call statistics over the last five quarters.
6. The Service will continue to operate its preventative strategies and will continue to report on their impact in the future.

Quarter	All Fires	Special Service Incidents	All False Alarms	Total Incidents
Quarter 4 2004/05	721	385	891	1997
Quarter 1 2005/06	827	462	954	2243
Quarter 2 2005/06	922	477	1110	2509
Quarter 3 2005/06	669	475	1051	2195
Quarter 4 2005/06	751	375	809	1935



Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority
12 June 2006

7. For further information on Incident Statistics for 01 January to 31 March 2006 please see Appendix 1.

Number of Home Fire Safety Checks from 01 January 2006 – 31 March 2006

Quarter	Number of visits	Recorded Hours on HFSCs	Smoke alarms fitted	Replacement batteries fitted to existing smoke alarms
Q3 Oct-Dec 2005	507	1550	691	133
Q4 Jan-Mar 2006	597	1623	718	94

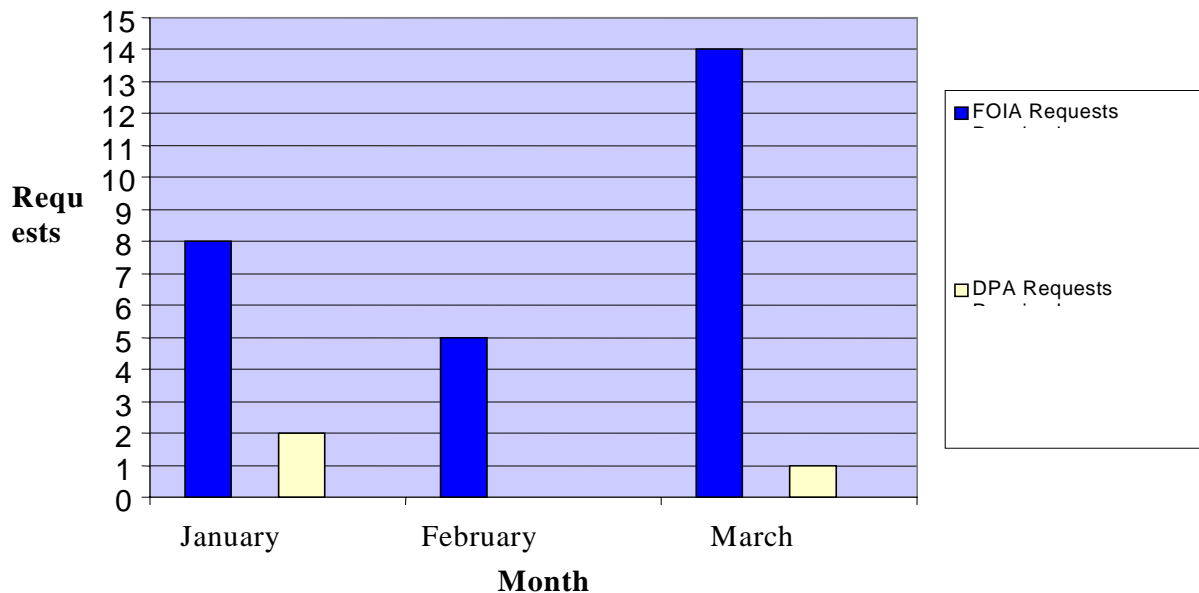
School Visits from 01 January 2006 – 31 March 2006

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	TOTALS
Watches	19	13		32
Audience	623	581		1104
Education Assistants	20	12	14	46
Audience	712	443	399	1554

	Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2		Key Stage 3	
	Q3 05/06 Oct-Dec 2005	Q4 05/06 Jan-Mar 2006	Q3 05/06 Oct-Dec 2005	Q4 05/06 Jan-Mar 2006	Q3 05/06 Oct-Dec 2005	Q4 05/06 Jan-Mar 2006
Watches	23	19	34	13		
Audience	686	623	1027	581		
Education Assistants	17	20	13	12	9	14
Audience	798	712	563	443	775	399

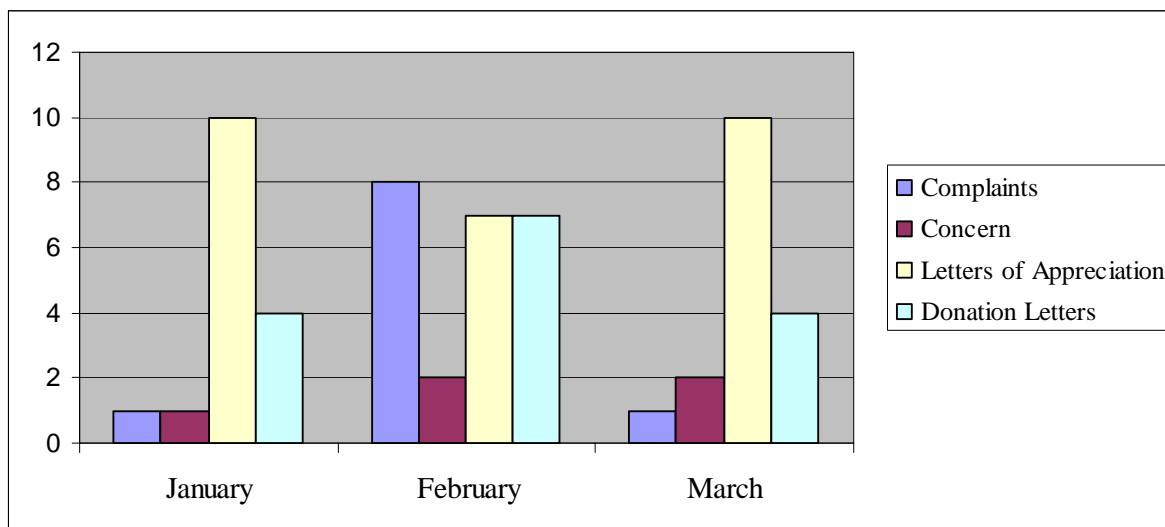
	Totals for all Key Stages	
	Q3 05/06 Oct-Dec 2005	Q4 05/06 Jan-Mar 2006
Watches	57	32
Audience	1713	1204
Education Assistants	39	46
Audience	2136	1554

Freedom of Information Requests



Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
Data Protection Act (DPA)
Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) none received)

Letters of Appreciation/Donation/Complaints/Concerns



8. All letters will be made available for Members' perusal at the meeting.

Health and Safety

Accidents and Injuries

9. The accident rate for the fourth quarter shows a slight decrease on the immediately preceding quarter (23 compared to 25 last quarter). However, the performance is disappointing when compared to last year's figures during the same quarter - this quarter, 23 accidents were reported, 4 of which were reportable under RIDDOR, compared to 13 reported accidents in the final quarter of 2004-05, 2 of which were reportable under RIDDOR.
10. Again, injuries predominantly occurred during routine, non-operational activities on Service premises – accounting for 70%. Of the injuries at operational incidents, it was once more found that these were almost exclusively attributable to either poor manual handling techniques or general complacency and lack of awareness of the surrounding environment.

	Accidents	RIDDOR	% Rate on Establishment
January – March 2005	13	2	1.6
April – June 2005	17	3	2.1
July – September 2005	19	4	2.4
October – December 2005	25	2	3.1
January – March 2006	23	4	2.9

Items of Interest

Incidents

Disabled Firefighter Return to Work Programme

11. The Unit has completed further assessments of a Firefighter who lost his lower left leg in a non work related accident. This has covered participation in a road traffic collision scenario, a combination of breathing apparatus (B.A) and ladder scenarios and also the wearing of B.A. in a confined space. The individual has also visited the Motion Analysis Research and Rehabilitation Centre at University College Worcester for further bio-mechanic assessments, and has now returned to full operational duties, with a program of regular reviews to take place over the coming months.

Serious fire in Kidderminster

12. At 0230 hrs on 15 March 2006, the Service was called to a severe fire involving approximately 5000 wooden pallets on fire. On arrival the fire was found to be rapidly spreading into an adjacent 1200m² single storey factory units of multiple usage. Fire Control received 68 repeat calls to the incident which could be seen at a distance of a few miles. The fire required an attendance of 8 Fire Appliances for

firefighting, the Command Support and Incident Support Units plus two additional support Appliances, the turntable ladder from Worcester and additionally the environmental Protection unit from Stourport. Fire investigation has determined the likely cause as arson.

13. The fire was successfully stopped from spreading beyond the original pallets and factory units involved with adjacent buildings being protected as a priority. Whilst the initial firefighting operations brought the fire under control within 3-4 hours, the contents of one of the buildings (baled jute for carpet making) created a deep seated fire requiring an attendance by the Service for a period of 5 days with over 47 Fire Appliance.
14. The incident has highlighted the importance the Service places on local risk management, in that extinguishing the fire was only part of our activity in this area. Approximately 400 metres along the same street, a similar site, but with around 70 000 pallets presents a serious risk if it were to be involved in fire and has required liaison with site owners, tenants, local authority, Environmental Health officers and HSE. Advice has been given on arson prevention and improving site security and our staff have received risk information regarding the site and tactical planning arrangements are in progress.

Serious Fire in the Village of Abberley

15. On Thursday 27 April 2006 crews were called to an incident in the village of Abberley, where a gentleman was trapped by fire in his bungalow. 20 Firefighters from Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport attended the incident. A 55 year old neighbour was alerted to the blaze by the daughter of the trapped gentleman and subsequently managed to rescue him.
16. The neighbour carried this out; using experience gained through scuba diving, and laid a trail using a garden hose to enable him to find his way out of the bungalow after he had rescued his neighbour. The rescued person was taken to Selly Oak Burns Unit where he is recovering having suffered 30 per cent burns to his arms and legs. His rescuer has been commended on his act of bravery and recommended for a bravery award by attending crews.

Hoax Calls

17. Between March 2005-06 the Service received 484 hoax and malicious calls. These calls put the lives of both residents and Fire Crews at risk as they rush out to attend false emergencies. Hoax Calls Awareness Week took place 24-30 March and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service supported this by using education to combat the problem, in particular targeting and educating the sector of the community who make these calls.

Youths Held in Custody for Arson on Farms

18. 2 youths who took part in a plot to set alight barns and haystacks across Worcestershire during 2004 have received a custodial sentence by Worcester Crown Court. The 2 youths in question attacked 6 premises between 20 September 2004 and 04 November 2004.

Gas Explosion

19. On 04 March 2006 an explosion blew out the front of a shop in Leominster. 2 women were left with minor injuries but no-one was seriously injured. All 3 Emergency Services attended the incident where the explosion was initially believed to be a gas explosion. On further investigation it was established that the explosion was caused by a canister of air freshener, which had been left on or near a heater.

Miracle Escape from A49 Road Crash

20. A Leominster Firefighter and Paramedic played a key role in what has been described as one of the most complex accident rescue operations on the A49. The accident occurred on 10 January 2006 and crews from Leominster, Tenbury and Droitwich were in attendance. 2 women were trapped in their car after it had become trapped under a lorry and 1 of the injured parties was trapped for 1 hour. Both women suffered injuries including broken arm and cuts and bruises.

Information for Members

Community Fire Safety

New Posts

21. Further expansion of the department in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has enabled a wide range of vital new initiatives to contribute positively to the overall aims of the organisation and to meet LAA targets.
22. There are now four new Community Safety Advisors based in the target LAA areas of Redditch, Worcester, Kidderminster and Hereford. The post holders are highly qualified and experienced in multi agency working in vulnerable communities and have made a significant impact in getting fire safety messages across to those at most risk in the community
23. A large number of projects are now planned and excellent links have been made with partner agencies in all areas. This has raised our profile in many communities and with key partners, in turn enabling vital information sharing to take place. As an example, vital links have been made with local Housing groups, West Mercia Police, Sure Start, Crime and Disorder Forums and Community Safety Partnerships.
24. One of the key aims of the new posts is to involve some of our key partner agencies to conduct Home Fire Safety Checks for each of their client groups. It is envisaged that this will increase access to vulnerable and at risk groups. Training sessions have been planned for members of Social Services, District Nurses, Carers and Health Visitors.
25. In addition to the extensive range of planned new initiatives, the new post holders have been able to make a positive contribution to the recruitment of minority groups into the Service.

26. In response to the need for support in reducing hoax calls and incidents of arson, significant progress has been made with the appointment of the new Juvenile Firesetters Co-ordinator post. This is a vital role for the organisation and an area in need of specialist attention. A full audit of our current position is presently being conducted, as the number of young people involved in fire setting activity continues to grow. A number of new schemes are in the pipeline in partnership with other agencies including the Youth Offending Team.
27. Working closely with West Midlands Fire Service, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service designed a Regional commercial radio campaign to cover the Central region, in relation to a Home Fire Safety initiative together with raising awareness of hoax calls.
28. In accordance with the aims of the Youth Strategy and the aims of the recent National 'Children and Young Peoples Strategy', the most recent appointment has been made for a Youth Services Officer. This new post will enable further expansion of a range of initiatives for young people outside of the mainstream arena. Many of these initiatives have been piloted by the department including 'Hot Squad' and targeted 'Work Experience' courses. Such programmes are aimed at raising the self esteem and confidence of disaffected young people and therefore increase school attendance. The post holder will also take responsibility for the coordination of all 'Crucial Crew' events for the Service and joins us with a wealth of specialist youth work experience and partnership working.

Partnership Working

Worcestershire Partnership

29. The Worcestershire Partnership Board, which is the County level Local Strategic Partnership, has recently agreed a process to admit new members. I am pleased to announce that the Authority is currently in the process of making an application to be part of this important body, membership of which will greatly enhance our ability to engage with the communities we serve.
30. A highly successful multi-agency event took place at SHQ to demonstrate various alternate smoke alarm alerting devices to those with hearing and visual impairment. All agencies agreed to assist us in meeting our overall aims in keeping this vulnerable sector of the community safe.
31. The department are supporting a number of watch based initiatives including 'Heart Smart Homes' in partnership with 'Sure Start' and 'Smoke Free Worcester'. The aim of this project is to reduce the number of parents smoking at home and in front of young children. The initiative will pilot in key target areas of Worcester and involves young and lone parents learning about the consequences of smoking and receiving smoking cessation advice. In conjunction with this, the families will also receive Home Fire Safety Checks and will enter into a contract with partners to avoid smoking in the home. The programme was officially launched in May 2006.

National Activity

32. The department continue to be at the forefront of National activity and have hosted visits from a range of other Brigades as an example of National best practice in Community Safety. New ground breaking projects for road and water safety are in the planning stage and will be launched this year and the significant contribution made to the new national education programme for the ODPM has been recently acknowledged by Sir Graham Meldrum.

Legislative Fire Safety

Enforcement Action

33. 2 Prohibition Notices were issued under section 10 of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 (as amended) both involved a serious risk to life from fire in residential properties, one in Evesham and the other in Hereford.

Regulatory Reform Order

34. Preparation for the above Order is still on-going and the department is continuing to train its Inspectors in preparation for the commencement of the legislation. Training has also taken place at 9 venues throughout Hereford and Worcester to increase the awareness of commerce and industry.
35. It should be noted that although the Fire Precautions Act ceases to have effect when the Regulatory Reform Order comes into force in October 2006, the ability of the Fire and Rescue Authority to prevent the use of premises by the issue of Prohibition Notices will remain under the new legislation.

Health and Safety Information

36. By far the highest numbers of reports continue to be attributed to injurious contact, with the remainder being the result of manual handling activities or slips, trips and falls and a smaller number resulting from exertion. A high number of these incidents once again can be attributed to general complacency and a failure to undertake a thorough visual inspection of the environment before proceeding
37. Encouragingly, the number of injuries occurring during firefighting operations has continued to fall from 7 during the last quarter of 2004-05 to 5 in this quarter. However, there has been a significant increase in the number of injuries occurring during routine work when compared to the last quarter of 2004-05, with these types of accidents accounting for 52% of all injuries this quarter. This, together with the fact that most injuries have been of a low severity and the result of slips, trips and falls, contact or manual handling indicates a level of employee complacency whilst undertaking routine activities on our premises.

Members Training Update

38. A number of successful training sessions have taken place providing continuous development for Members of the Authority which is monitored by Standards Committee in line with our Governance arrangements.
- Code of Conduct
 - Standards/Ethics
 - Freedom of Information/Environmental Regulations and Data Protection
 - Integrated Risk Management Planning
 - Performance Planning
 - Financial Management
39. The following courses are part of the overall aim to improve support and information available for Members.
- Industrial Relations
 - Disability
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Budget Seminar
 - Fire Control/Fire Link
 - CPA Workshops
 - Corporate Risk & Business Continuity Workshops
 -

Update of Audit Committee

40. The Committee have not met since the last FRA meeting.

Update of the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee

41. The BVPP Committee met on 6 April, 2006 and considered the following matters: progress towards achieving the Performance Plan targets and the quarterly performance report; the position on discussions with PriceWaterhouseCoopers on the Authority's Service planning process; the draft Best Value Performance Plan; the process of operational assurance, part of a Comprehensive Performance Assessment initiative; and proposals for the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-2008.

Update of Budget Committee

42. The Committee have not met since the last FRA meeting.

Update of Standards Committee

43. The Standards Committee met on 5 April 2006 and considered the following matters: its proposed ethical audit of the Authority, a discussion paper from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on standards of conduct, the forthcoming fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, and issues raised at the Independent Members Forum. The Standards Committee's annual report is included as a separate report elsewhere on this agenda.

44. Copies of the Minutes of these meetings have been or will be circulated to Members of the Authority.

West Midlands Regional Management Board

45. The West Midlands Regional Management Board (RMB) is scheduled to meet on 5 June 2006. Any key issues requiring the Authority's consideration will be reported at this meeting. There has been no RMB meeting since the last FRA in February 2006.

Marketing

Business

46. A business related Fire and Rescue Service advertisement and editorial copy will be published in the Wychavon Business Guide. The content of the message is to profile Legislative Fire Safety Departments, the Training and Development Centre and also remind local businesses about the enhanced skills and good working practice that employing Retained Firefighters can bring.

National Chip Week 13 -20 February 2006

47. During national Chip Week the Service issued important safety messages about the risks of fire caused by unattended cooking and highlighted how those risks significantly increased when a chip-pan (or similar) was used.

National No Smoking Day

48. National 'No Smoking Day' presented the Service with an excellent opportunity to highlight the increased risks of death and injury from smoking materials in and around the home. Working with Smoke Free Worcestershire and Herefordshire PCT posters were issued promoting the Services safety messages and the smoking cessation services provided by both PCT's.

Radio Campaigns

49. Hard-hitting adverts were produced featuring Firefighters and Control staff from both regions. These were simultaneously broadcast on Wyvern FM, Heart FM, and Galaxy radio transmitters throughout February and March 2006. The adverts were designed to make listeners ensure good fire safety in their homes, and provide information about Fire Service Home Fire Safety Checks for those who were in need.
50. The campaign produced a noticeable increase in HFSC requests with a significant number of referrals for North Worcestershire being received. Based on RAJAR figures this joint fire service message would have reached an audience of approximately 1.25 million individuals across central England.
51. An agreement has been put in place with Chrysalis Radio who produced the adverts for both Services for future Community Safety use.

Fire Appliances

52. A series of safety messages have been added to a number of Fire Appliances promoting both road and fire safety. The road safety messages have been strategically placed so that passing drivers will (in most cases) see it when an Appliance is present at a Road Traffic Collision.

Health and Safety

Stress

53. Meetings of the Stress Review Team have been held and the team has begun identifying routes for highlighting potential stressors, signs and symptoms and sources of support and coping strategies. Also, the Stress Management Awareness Training for Managers has now been successfully completed, with over 90% of the Service's Managers attending.

Water Rescue Strategy

54. The water safety strategy continues to be developed. The Service recently worked in partnership with the Royal Lifesaving Society to develop a Water Safety Awareness Pack to be delivered in schools. This pilot scheme is currently being delivered by volunteers from Evesham Fire Station and Mercia Inshore Rescue Association, with a view to becoming a national initiative in the coming months.
55. The Service is developing water rescue capability with specialist rescue teams being trained by the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service. When fully implemented it will strengthen the specialist rescue capability at Hereford, Worcester, Evesham and provide a new unit at Kidderminster. Inter-agency arrangements have been made with the Police and Ambulance service to co-ordinate our response to water related incidents and we now have operational support from the voluntary rescue agencies.
56. Finally, the Service is further developing the skills and experience of our existing water rescue instructors through training delivered by the Charlotte Fire Department in North Carolina. This training has been developed in response to the severe flooding that typically follows hurricane events. In recognition of the ongoing partnership between our two Fire and Rescue Services working on behalf of U.K and U.S.A National Emergency Planning Community, this training will be provided free of charge for 12 H&WFRS staff.
57. The Chief Fire Officer has agreed to visit the U.S.A separately, both to contribute to the Senate enquiry into Hurricane Katrina and to share details about U.K national planning arrangements with counterparts in the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB)

Project P1.1 Management of Health and Safety

58. The Regional Health & Safety Group has discussed the implications of a recently published draft framework document and identified where the Region will be able to collaborate on developing good practice safety procedures. This has led to the

development of a number of objectives that the Group will work towards during 2006-2008.

Training and Development Centre

NVQ – Franchise Agreement with Warwickshire FRS

59. An agreement has been established between Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service concerning the joint management and administration of Edexcel NVQ's Level 3 – Operations in the Community and Fire Control Operations.
60. To-date 5 Control Firefighters from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service have been registered during 2006 with a further 16 Operational Firefighters to be registered by the end of June and another 8 by the close of the year.
61. As franchisor Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service acts as a 'model' centre throughout the Service nationally enabling promotion of its established policies and procedures. This joint initiative also provides opportunities to share good practice in the provision of NVQ's for employees in both Fire and Rescue Services.
62. During the past quarter, Instructors supported 2 Wholetime Recruit Courses which have been undertaken as part of Regional collaboration with Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire Services. Work is progressing on the delivery of 4 RDS Recruit Modular Phase 1 courses.
63. The new Hot Fire Training facility at Kidderminster has been used extensively during the last quarter and very positive feedback has been received from staff that has undergone training in the facility.
64. The use of updated Breathing Apparatus Assessments is proving to be beneficial; testing both theoretical and practical elements and providing useful information on this very safety critical area of competence assessment. The greater flexibility of evening and weekend courses is proving popular with the majority of RDS staff.
65. A new Blue Light Emergency Driving course for Officers, covering the skills for driving to emergencies, such as road craft, vehicle positioning as well as legal responsibilities, is now being delivered. The course incorporates driving under 'blue light conditions' giving candidates a more realistic experience of other road users' reactions and ensures that they are more aware whilst driving to operational incidents. The second phase of the course involves practical driving by the candidates will also be delivered later this year.
66. The Commercial Department continues to provide essential training in fire safety to businesses, with the Basic Fire Fighting, Fire Warden's and the Management Fire Risk

Assessment courses, not to mention First Aid and Manual Handling all of which contribute to meeting the goals of the Service's IRMP.

Summary of Courses : 01.01.06 – 31.03.06			
Operational Courses	40	522	Training Days
Commercial Courses	22	273	Students Trained
Meetings & Seminars	33	488	Attendees
Summary of Courses : 01.04.05 – 31.03.06			
Operational Courses	179	1536	Training Days
Commercial Courses	77	976	Students Trained
Meetings & Seminars	193	1987	Attendees

Equality and Diversity/FAWAG Update

The Equality & Diversity Strategy

67. A full review of the Strategy is underway, which will focus on the outputs and achievements of our approach to Equality & Diversity thus far, and identify recommendations for the continued achievement against the Equality Standard for Local Government.
68. To accommodate this, work has been undertaken to identify the implications of the quality duty under the Disability Discrimination Act, coming into force later this year, as well as a similar duty on gender under the Sex Discrimination Act, which follows in the New Year. Both areas will be incorporated into the generic scheme.

Age Legislation

69. A scoping exercise is underway to examine the implications of the new Age Discrimination legislation. Upon completion, equalities recommendations will be incorporated into the equality and diversity strategy. This work will fall alongside the review.

FAWAG

70. The group is considering current priorities for the 2006/07 year, which will coincide with changes in the legislative framework (as outlined previously). The group continues to prioritise core objectives, especially recruitment of women and ethnic minorities to the Service.

Partnership with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFRS) (USAR Personal Protective Equipment)

71. Currently the Service is working with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service on a joint procurement venture for the supply and management of USAR PPE in line with the guidance document – New Dimensions Programme. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service.

Appointment of High Sheriff

72. Sir John Foley is this year's High Sheriff of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. He took up the ceremonial position in April 2006.

Annual Award Ceremony

73. This year's Annual Award Ceremony is to take place on Saturday 01 July 2006 at Service Headquarters.

Carol Service

74. This year's Family and Friends Carol Service will be held at Worcester Cathedral on Tuesday 19 December 2006.

Fire & Emergency Support Vehicle

75. On Monday 13 March 2006 The British Red Cross went live with the 'Fire & Emergency Support Vehicle'. This is initially to be mobilised from the British Red Cross premise on London Road, Worcester. The service will initially be available Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, until sufficient numbers of volunteers are recruited. The vehicle will provide support for members of the public following operational incidents. For further information please contact ACO Jon Hall.

Background Papers

None

Incident Statistics – Comparative Data 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Mar 2006

		Quarter 3 2005/06			Quarter 4 2005/06		
District	Station	Total Fires	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents	Total False Alarms	Total Fires	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents	Total False Alarms
South	21 Worcester	89	61	221	78	60	163
	26 Droitwich	40	34	53	35	24	44
	28 Evesham	28	26	39	29	14	35
	29 Pebworth	8	0	2	1	2	1
	30 Broadway	4	4	10	3	2	7
	31 Pershore	16	16	25	15	8	13
	32 Upton	4	16	11	10	10	3
	41 Malvern	28	24	44	33	19	49
	53 Tenbury Wells	9	6	1	10	8	1
District Total		226	245	406	214	147	316
North	22 Stourport	28	15	39	57	7	36
	23 Bewdley	8	9	9	10	9	7
	24 Kidderminster	50	38	145	73	33	103
	25 Bromsgrove	57	43	89	57	35	78
	27 Redditch	127	61	163	132	49	117
District Total		270	210	445	329	133	341
West	42 Ledbury	23	11	30	11	10	17
	43 Fownhope	4	4	9	3	1	3
	44 Ross on Wye	22	23	11	19	8	9
	45 Whitchurch	8	18	2	3	6	0
	46 Hereford	71	45	103	93	26	89
	47 Ewyas Harold	2	2	0	9	0	3
	48 Eardisley	3	1	2	9	5	4
	49 Kington	5	5	0	6	4	1
	50 Leintwardine	4	4	0	5	2	0
	51 Kingsland	5	0	8	9	3	1
	52 Leominster	18	7	20	24	15	19
	54 Bromyard	7	13	14	14	13	3
	55 Peterchurch	2	0	1	3	2	3
District Total		173	122	200	208	95	152
GRAND TOTAL		669	475	1051	751	375	809

Fire Statistics 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Mar 2006

District	Station	Primary Fires (FDR1)	Secondary Fires (FDR3)	Chimney Fires	Total Fires	Rescues at Fires	Casualties at Fires	Fatalities at Fires
South	21 Worcester	41	35	2	78	2	6	0
	26 Droitwich	20	11	4	35	0	0	0
	28 Evesham	12	13	4	29	0	0	0
	29 Pebworth	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
	30 Broadway	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
	31 Pershore	5	4	6	15	0	0	0
	32 Upton	3	2	5	10	0	0	0
	41 Malvern	12	15	6	33	0	0	0
	53 Tenbury	2	0	8	10	0	0	0
District Total	95	83	36	214	2	6	0	
North	22 Stourport	17	37	3	57	0	0	0
	23 Bewdley	2	2	6	10	0	0	0
	24 Kidderminster	30	38	5	73	0	1	0
	25 Bromsgrove	30	19	8	57	0	0	0
	27 Redditch	62	67	3	132	1	4	0
District Total	141	163	25	329	1	5	0	
West	42 Ledbury	5	1	5	11	0	2	0
	43 Fownhope	1	0	2	3	0	0	0
	44 Ross on Wye	11	2	6	19	0	4	0
	45 Whitchurch	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
	46 Hereford	41	38	14	93	0	1	0
	47 Ewyas Harold	1	1	7	9	0	0	0
	48 Eardisley	2	0	7	9	0	0	0
	49 Kington	1	1	4	6	0	0	0
	50 Leintwardine	0	0	5	5	0	0	0
	51 Kingsland	3	1	5	9	0	0	0
	52 Leominster	7	5	12	24	0	0	0
	54 Bromyard	6	1	7	14	1	1	0
	55 Peterchurch	2	0	1	3	0	0	0
District Total	80	50	78	208	1	8	0	
GRAND TOTAL		316	296	139	751	4	19	0

Special Service Incidents 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Mar 2006

District	Station	Emergency Special Services	Non-emergency Special Services	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents	Rescues at SS Incidents	Casualties at SS Incidents	Fatalities at SS Incidents
South	21 Worcester	60	0	60	1	8	1
	26 Droitwich	24	0	24	1	5	0
	28 Evesham	14	0	14	1	1	1
	29 Pebworth	2	0	2	1	1	0
	30 Broadway	2	0	2	0	0	0
	31 Pershore	8	0	8	0	1	0
	32 Upton	10	0	10	0	3	1
	41 Malvern	19	0	19	0	1	0
	53 Tenbury	8	0	8	0	1	0
District Total	147	0	147	4	21	3	
North	22 Stourport	7	0	7	0	0	0
	23 Bewdley	9	0	9	0	3	0
	24 Kidderminster	33	0	33	3	10	0
	25 Bromsgrove	35	0	35	1	6	1
	27 Redditch	49	0	49	0	5	0
District Total	133	0	133	4	24	1	
West	42 Ledbury	10	0	10	0	3	0
	43 Fownhope	1	0	1	0	0	0
	44 Ross on Wye	8	0	8	0	5	0
	45 Whitchurch	6	0	6	0	7	0
	46 Hereford	26	0	26	0	7	0
	47 Ewyas Harold	0	0	0	0	0	0
	48 Eardisley	5	0	5	0	4	0
	49 Kington	4	0	4	0	1	0
	50 Leintwardine	2	0	2	0	0	0
	51 Kingsland	3	0	3	0	1	0
	52 Leominster	15	0	15	0	13	0
	54 Bromyard	13	0	13	0	4	0
55 Peterchurch	2	0	2	0	3	0	
District Total	95	0	95	0	48	0	
GRAND TOTAL		375	0	375	8	93	4

Special Service Incidents 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Mar 2006

District	Station	False Alarm Malicious	False Alarm Good Intent	False Alarm Apparatus	Total False Alarms
South	21 Worcester	7	37	119	163
	26 Droitwich	1	11	32	44
	28 Evesham	4	9	22	35
	29 Pebworth	0	1	0	1
	30 Broadway	1	1	5	7
	31 Pershore	0	3	10	13
	32 Upton	0	1	2	3
	41 Malvern	4	10	35	49
	53 Tenbury	0	0	1	1
District Total	17	73	226	316	
North	22 Stourport	4	14	18	36
	23 Bewdley	0	3	4	7
	24 Kidderminster	4	17	82	103
	25 Bromsgrove	5	16	57	78
	27 Redditch	8	23	86	117
District Total	21	73	247	341	
West	42 Ledbury	0	3	14	17
	43 Fownhope	0	2	1	3
	44 Ross on Wye	0	6	3	9
	45 Whitchurch	0	0	0	0
	46 Hereford	4	23	62	89
	47 Ewyas Harold	0	0	3	3
	48 Eardisley	0	1	3	4
	49 Kington	1	0	0	1
	50 Leintwardine	0	0	0	0
	51 Kingsland	0	0	1	1
	52 Leominster	6	3	10	19
	54 Bromyard	0	1	2	3
	55 Peterchurch	0	0	3	3
District Total	11	39	102	152	

Fire Safety Inspections 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Mar 2006	
Full inspections	2
Re-inspections	272
Plan inspections	16
Follow-up inspections	84
Specific inspections	458
Building Regulations Plans/Consultations	288

Special Service Incidents 1 Jan 2006 to 31 Mar 2006

GRAND TOTAL	49	185	575	809
--------------------	-----------	------------	------------	------------

10. PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUT-TURN 2005/06

Purpose of report

1. To consider the Revenue and Capital budget out-turns for 2005/06.
-

Introduction

2. Although financial matters sit within the terms of reference of the Budget Committee, this Committee does not meet until July. The Accounts have to be approved by the end of June 2006 and a meeting of the Audit Committee is scheduled for 28 June for this purpose. The opportunity has, therefore, been taken to bring a report on the out-turn to Members at the earliest opportunity.
3. Detailed monitoring reports have been presented to the Audit and Budget Committee throughout the year.

Revenue Budget

4. The budget requirement for 2005/06 was set by the Authority in February 2005 at £27.289m, adjusting for a transfer from ear-marked reserves the total is made up as below:

	ORIGINAL BUDGET	REVISION	REVISED BUDGET
	£m	£m	£m
Expenditure on Services	26.810	0.021	26.831
Transfer to Ear-marked Reserves - provision to repay Transitional Grant	0.327		0.327
Transfer from Ear-marked Reserves - Training	0.000	(0.021)	(0.021)
Transfer to General Balances - planned strengthening	0.152		0.152
	27.289	0.000	27.289

5. In October 2005 the Audit & Budget Committee noted virement and redirection of £0.133m of net underspending within the £26.831m total.
6. The budget paper presented to the Authority on 15 February 2006 reported a projected underspending of £0.060m, which was consistent with the Monitoring Reports presented to the Authority and Audit & Budget Committee throughout the year.
7. Since the last meeting the Authority has been notified of some significant grants in respect of New Dimensions, and has received some clarity on the treatment of Urban Search and Rescue grants already received. Due to the timing it has not been possible to incur expenditure in 2005/06 and these sums will be transferred to earmarked reserves.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority
12 June 2006

8. Subject to final confirmation and external audit, an actual out-turn underspending of £0.041m is anticipated.
9. Details of the variation at budget holder level are shown in Appendix 1.

	Revised Budget	Provisional Out-Turn	Variation
	£m	£m	£m
Expenditure on Services	27.245	27.231	(0.014)
Grants & Contributions	(0.414)	(1.217)	(0.803)
	26.831	26.014	(0.817)
Budgeted Transfer to/from Ear-marked Reserves	0.306	0.306	0.000
Other Transfer to/from Ear-marked Reserves	0.000	0.776	0.776
	27.137	27.096	(0.041)
Transfer to General Balances - planned strengthening	0.152	0.193	0.041
	27.289	27.289	0.000

10. The underlying reasons for the variation are in the table below.

	£m
Wholetime Pay	(0.165)
Pensions - back-dated new arrangements	0.113
IPDS	(0.113)
Gas & Electricity Prices	0.141
Investment Income	(0.080)
Other Capital Financing - <i>Int Rates/change from leasing etc</i>	(0.106)
Provision for ODPM Grant Claw-back	0.203
Command & Control - Interim Costs	0.030
Additional HQ Lease Premium - net of potential VAT liability	(0.060)
Vehicle Insurance - additional New Dimensions	0.018
Net Other	(0.022)
	(0.041)

11. Members will recall that in late 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister notified the Authority of retrospective claw-back of £0.203m of 2004/05 and 2005/06 grant. Expenditure has been restrained to cover this cost, whilst minimising the effect on services. The final out-turn incorporates these decisions.
12. As referred to earlier, for Final Accounts purposes, some of the expenditure may be included in earmarked reserves. These will be used to meet the specific commitments and are not available for other purposes.
13. The opening balance sheet contained an earmarked reserve of £0.716m in respect of pension costs. In 2005/06, largely as a result of a windfall gain on Transfer Values, it has only been necessary to use £0.516m to support expenditure, leaving £0.200m in the reserve.

14. It is suggested that this sum is retained in the reserve during 2006/07, until the new pension scheme arrangements are fully understood, when it is probable that the sum could be transferred to general balances. This would allow earlier achievement of the Medium Term Financial Strategy target for balances of 4% of Core Budget.
15. It is suggested that the £0.041m underspend be carried to general balances, bringing the total at 31 March 2006 to £0.844m or 3.1% of 2006/07 Core Budget.

Capital Budget

16. In February 2005 the Authority set a capital budget of £6.608m for 2005/06. This was increased in June 2005 by £0.679m to cover slippage from 2004/05, and in October the Audit & Budget Committee approved a further increase of £1.609m in respect of vehicles and breathing apparatus training equipment, which was transferred from leasing provision. This brings the total capital budget to £8.896m.
17. Expenditure of £8.733m has been incurred against this budget and details are shown in Appendix 2.
18. Of the total underspending of £0.167m, a total of £0.148m relates to retentions on building projects and unplanned slippage on other schemes. Details are as below:

	£m
HQ Project - Retentions	0.011
Other Building Projects - Retentions	0.005
Fireground radios - delays awaiting National contract	0.051
VMDS - final sign off not yet	0.036
Document Management - to be re-aligned with new structure	0.028
Water Rescue equipment	0.017
	0.148

19. It is proposed that these sums are slipped and added to the 2006/07 budget. This will not increase Revenue Costs as the capital financing costs are already provided for within the 2006/07 budget.

Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends that:

- (a) **the treatment of the Pensions Reserve as set out at paragraph 14 of the report be approved;**
- (b) **the transfer of the under-spend to general balances as set out at paragraph 15 of the report be approved; and**
- (c) **the increase in 2006/07 Capital Budgets arising from expenditure slippage in 2005/06 as set out in paragraph 19 of the report be approved.**

Background Papers

None

2005/06 REVENUE BUDGET : PROVISIONAL OUT-TURN

	REVISED BUDGET	OUT-TURN	VARIATION
Employees - Ff Wholetime	11,156	11,001	(155)
Employees - Ff Retained	2,543	2,591	48
Employees - Control Room	664	630	(34)
Employees - Support Staff	2,589	2,575	(14)
Temporary Staff	61	118	57
	17,013	16,915	(98)
Firefighters Pension Scheme	3,824	3,834	10
Ill Health Charges - new regime	0	113	113
	3,824	3,947	123
Community Fire Safety	281	239	(42)
Extinguisher Maintenance	(20)	(25)	(5)
Other Service Delivery	70	84	14
	331	298	(33)
Personnel & Medical	141	149	8
IPDS	124	11	(113)
Health & Safety	5	0	(5)
Training	481	514	33
	751	674	(77)
Equipment Support/Supplies	853	866	13
Performance Management	57	10	(47)
Water Support	57	50	(7)
Fleet	417	436	19
	1,384	1,362	(22)
FRA Costs	232	193	(39)
Insurances	267	292	25
ICT	679	726	47
Admin Services	261	272	11
Corporate Events	17	9	(8)
Property Services	1,073	1,190	117
	2,529	2,682	153
Finance SLAs and Audit Fees	107	169	62
Travel & Subsistence - FRS wide	62	108	46
Capital Financing	1,184	998	(186)
Other Employee Expenses	57	77	20
Other Corporate Costs	3	1	(2)
	1,413	1,353	(60)
Grants & Contributions	(64)	(807)	(743)
HQ Lease Premium	(350)	(410)	(60)
	(414)	(1,217)	(803)
	26,831	26,014	(817)
to/(from) Earmarked reserves	306	1,082	776
	306	1,082	776
	27,137	27,096	(41)
Planned Transfer to/(from) Balances	152	152	0
Un-planned Transfer to/(from) Balances		41	41
	152	193	41
	27,289	27,289	(0)

2005/06 CAPITALREVENUE BUDGET : PROVISIONAL OUT-TURN

	REVISED BUDGET 2005/06 £000	OUT-TURN 2005/06 £000	VARIATION 2005/06 £000	PROPOSED Slippage to 2006/07 £000	OTHER VARIATION £000
HQ/Workshops Project					
Headquarters	6,526	6,515	(11)	(11)	0
	6,526	6,515	(11)	(11)	0
Property Projects					
District HQ moves	60	63	3		3
Ewyas Harold	82	66	(16)	(2)	(14)
Kington	50	57	7	(2)	9
Kingsland	35	28	(7)	(1)	(6)
	227	214	(13)	(5)	(8)
ICT Projects					
Fireground Radios	80	29	(51)	(51)	0
VMDS	107	71	(36)	(36)	0
Internet & Remote Access	14	14	0		0
Router Replacement	24	15	(9)		(9)
Voice over IP	30	20	(10)		(10)
Breeze	22	19	(3)		(3)
Developments	14	13	(1)		(1)
Computer Purchases	58	56	(2)		(2)
Document Management System	28	0	(28)	(28)	0
Software Purchase	42	53	11		11
Data Storage & Backup	25	25	0		0
	444	315	(129)	(115)	(14)
Other Schemes					
IRMP - Water Rescue Equipment	75	58	(17)	(17)	0
BA Training Facility	105	108	3		3
	180	166	(14)	(17)	3
Vehicle Programme					
Pumping Appliances (8)	1,519	1,523	4		4
	1,519	1,523	4	0	4
TOTAL	8,896	8,733	(167)	(148)	(19)

11. STRATEGIC SERVICE PLANNING PROCESS

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on the proposed arrangements to re-align the Strategic Service Planning Process.
-

Background

2. The Service commissioned a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers on how best to improve the Strategic Planning Process, in particular how to build capacity and strengthen strategic programme management. A copy of the report is appended. The recommendations are wide ranging in that they bring together a number of planning processes such as Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), the Best Value Performance Plan, Corporate Planning and Performance Planning and Financial Planning within a structured management programme.
3. The actions themes recommended are:
 - Adopting a strategic management programme
 - Strengthening Strategic Planning
 - Enhancing support to priority areas
4. The principles behind these recommendations have already been incorporated within the Corporate Plan for 2006/07, the first step being to re-align the IRMP process.
5. The IRMP action plan for 2007/08 will go out for consultation after the Authority's meeting in June instead of the usual September. This will allow the Plan to align with crucial budget planning processes in the autumn.
6. The Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee is to consider these arrangements on 8 June 2006 and any comments will be reported at the meeting.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted subject to any comments the Authority wishes to make.

Background Papers

None

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Overview of strategic planning timetable and process

Final Report
May 2006

In the event that, pursuant to a request which the Council have received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is required to disclose any information contained in this document, they will notify PwC promptly and consult with PwC prior to disclosing such information. Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority agrees to pay due regard to any representations which PwC may make in connection with such disclosure and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority shall apply any relevant exemptions which may exist under the Act to such information. If, following consultation with PwC, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority disclose any such information; it shall ensure that any disclaimer which PwC has included or may subsequently wish to include in the information is reproduced in full in any copies disclosed.

Our Report is provided solely for your use and benefit and to assist you in areas of potential opportunity to improve your approach to the topic reviewed. Our Report is not to be used for any other purpose nor is it to be copied, distributed or otherwise made available or referred to without our prior written consent. We will not accept any liability or responsibility to any third party to whom our Report is shown or into whose hands it may come.

Introduction and context

Introduction and Context **4 - 5**

Key Findings **6 - 9**

- Overview of the key plans 6
- Overview of the planning timetable 7
- The current planning calendar 8
- The desired planning calendar 9
- Benefits of the new approach 10
- Transitional issues to consider 11

The Way Forward **12**

Introduction and context

Introduction

As part of our audit plan for 2005/06 we have agreed with the Authority to conduct a review of strategic planning processes. The first phase of this review is to identify the current approach to strategic planning and to identify transitional issues to consider in a move towards a more integrated planning process.

We would welcome the opportunity for further discussion to explore the risks and challenges with implementing such an approach.

Overall Purpose

To map the current strategic planning timetable and process in operation at the Authority and to identify potential improvements.

Objectives:

Within the planning cycle to:

- Identify the key plans.
- Outline the relationships between the various plans, along with the responsibilities of staff producing them.
- Clarify the key dates and deadlines, and in particular the chronology of interdependencies.
- Suggest ways of integrating the planning process.

Introduction and context

Approach

The fieldwork for this review included:

- Utilising cumulative knowledge from work undertaken to audit the Authority's best value performance plan.
- One to one discussions with:

Mike Redfern Appointed successor – Head of Corporate Services

Lucy Phillips Deputy Chief Officer and Head of Policy, Performance

Mark Carpenter Lead on Integrated Risk Management Plan

Martin Reohorn Director of Finance

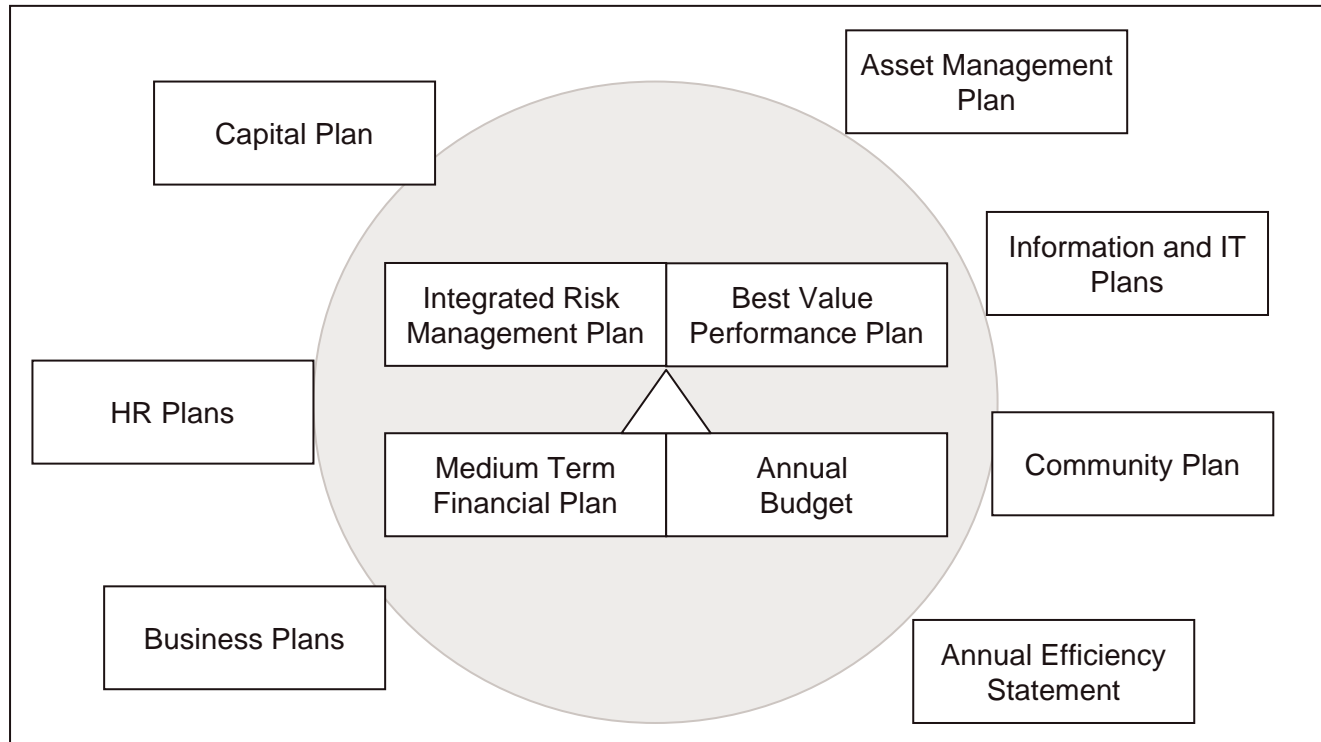
Scope

For the purposes of this review we have focused on the following plans as the key strategic documents:

- Best Value Performance Plan
- Annual Budget and Financial Plan
- Integrated Risk Management Plan

These are perceived by staff to be the key plans that need to be brought together more effectively in order to facilitate a more integrated planning process.

Overview of the key plans



- There are a wide variety of different plans that the Authority produces each year, some of which are shown above.
- For the purposes of this review, we have focussed on examining the four plans in the circle and how these can be brought together in a more integrated approach.
- Over time, the Authority should look at ways of bringing the other peripheral plans into the integrated approach also.

Introduction and context

The current planning timetable does not facilitate an integrated approach and places an unnecessary strain on the capacity of the organisation. In particular, the main problems relate to the timing of the IRMP and its links with the annual financial planning cycle:

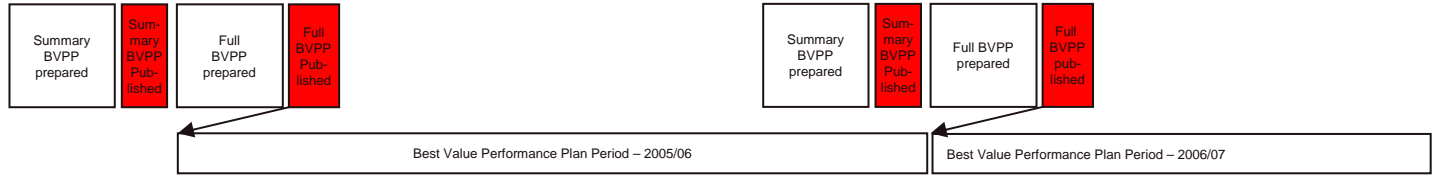
- The draft IRMP is published and consulted upon at about the same time as the annual budget planning round starts – meaning that only draft proposals can be considered in the detailed financial plans. This presents two key risks :
 - Either the budget is based on draft IRMP proposals
 - Or the Authority is restricted in how it can respond to consultation on the IRMP.
- The IRMP and the Budget are approved at the same meeting of the full Authority, meaning that non-approval of either document is extremely difficult to manage. Furthermore, depending on the nature of the non-approval there could be a fundamental implications for the other document.

The following pages demonstrate the current calendar and a potential option for the future. Based on discussions with staff during the course of the work the revised planning calendar is deemed feasible to implement in the coming year.

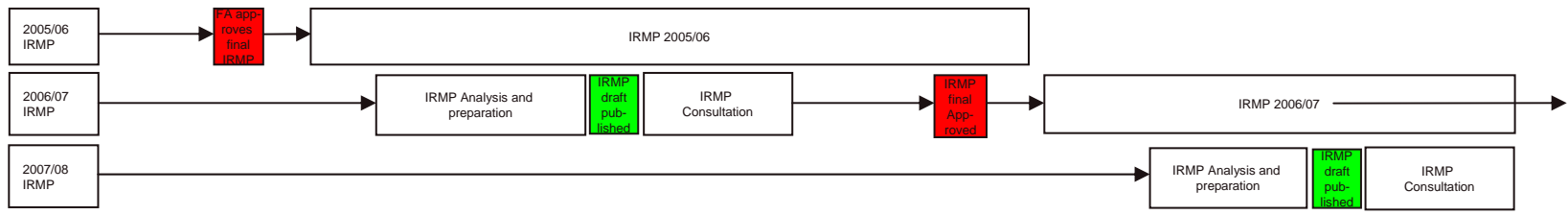
Current Planning Calendar



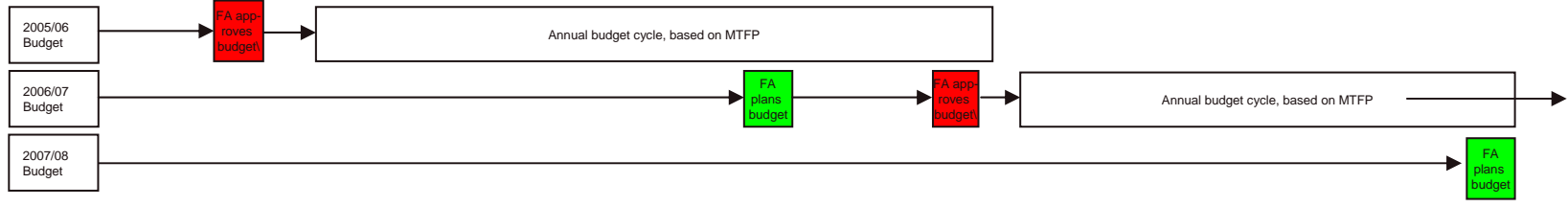
**Corporate Plan
(incorporating the
BVPP)**



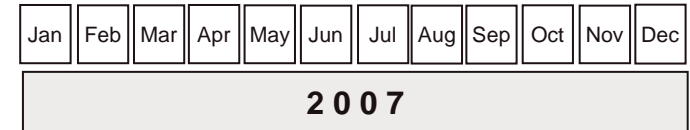
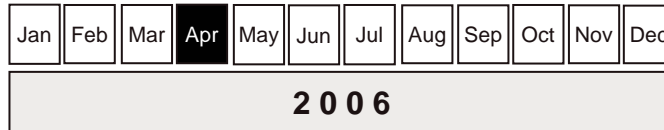
**Integrated Risk
Management Plan**



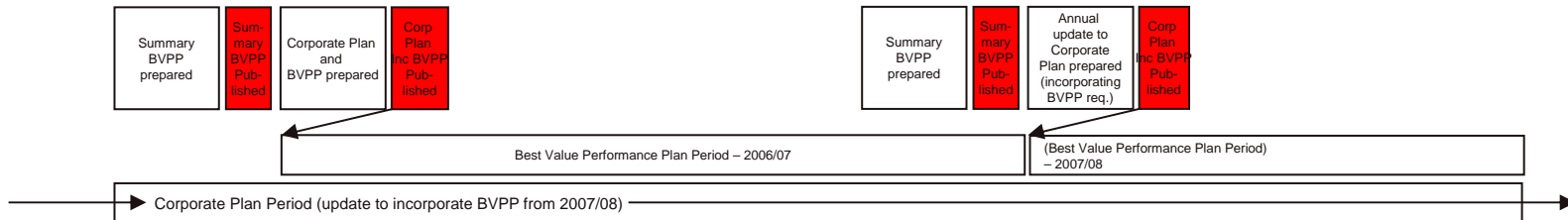
Financial Plan



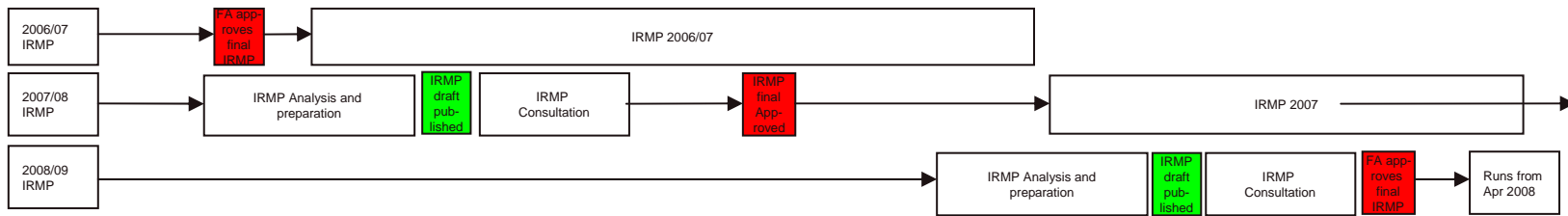
Desired Planning Calendar



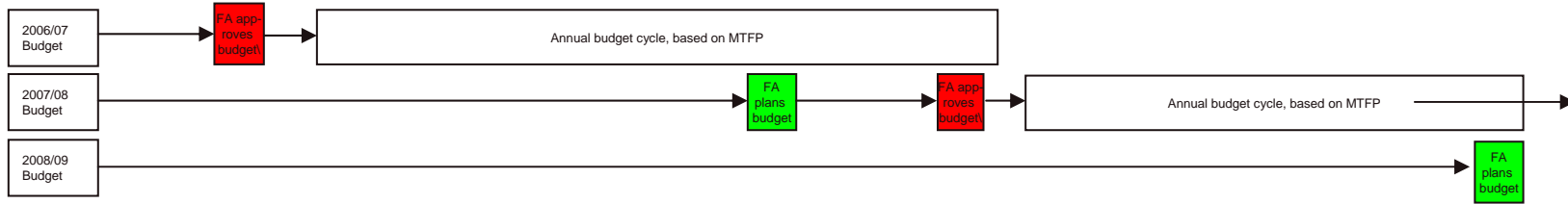
**Corporate Plan
(incorporating the
BVPP)**



**Integrated Risk
Management Plan**



Financial Plan



The key change to bring the planning cycles more appropriately into line is to publish the draft 2007 IRMP in June 2006 (rather than September 2006) and to complete the statutory IRMP consultation by the end of September 2006. It is then possible to approve the final IRMP in time to build into the financial planning cycle. The IRMP will then drive the budget process more directly. Furthermore, with this approach it is also possible to produce the draft IRMP alongside the final published BVPP. One final change will be to produce a corporate plan which incorporates the BVPP rather than producing a stand alone BVPP.

Benefits of the new approach

There are a number of benefits to bringing the publication of the IRMP forward in the year:

- The draft IRMP could be published alongside the final BVPP – promoting the mindset of a more joined up approach within the organisation and emphasising this to external stakeholders and interest groups (eg the Audit Commission, Government Office etc).
- The BVPP itself can be integrated into a wider corporate plan.
- An integrated planning team could be drawn together from existing resources to produce both documents alongside each other.
- The consultation on the IRMP would be complete before the annual budget cycle kicks off in earnest, enabling the Authority to take full account of the resource implications of the IRMP in the financial year.
- The Authority would be better placed to respond to IRMP consultation, as there will be time to amend the document before approval of the final budget.
- The financial impact statement produced by the Director of Finance in relation to implementing the IRMP could be built into the budget more effectively.
- The HR department will be able to cost the training implications of implementing the IRMP fully, enabling these costs to drive the budget, rather than the budget drive the training provision.
- There will be more time to validate and model the efficiency gains from implementing the IRMP before building them into the budget as cost improvements.

Transitional issues to consider

In order to move to this cycle the Authority will need to consider how it overcomes the ODPM (DCLA) requirement to produce an IRMP action plan that covers a 12 month period.

The Authority should also consider:

- How to ensure that a full and comprehensive financial assessment on the IRMP proposals is completed and agreed to ensure that all the IRMP proposals are affordable and not simply an ambitious but undeliverable “wish list”.
- Establishing a clear process to ensure that the IRMP properly feeds the annual budget planning process to ensure that the two planning “events” don’t become decoupled.
- How to re-badge the BVPP as a Corporate Plan incorporating the BVPP requirements.
- How to scale back the detail of the BVPP whilst ensuring that it meets the statutory minimum requirements, particularly where it overlaps with the IRMP (priorities, performance targets etc).
- The timescales for implementation - it is desirable to implement the changes for the 2006/07 planning round if the organisational capacity can be created to enable it.
- How to link the production of the annual efficiency statement with the medium term financial plan.

The way forward

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues presented in this document with the appropriate staff within the Authority.

The Authority should formally respond to the issues raised in the report by producing an action plan for implementation.

12. CORPORATE PLAN 2006/07

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval of the Authority's Corporate Plan 2006/07.
-

Background

2. As a key part of our planning process and a statutory requirement, the Authority produces and publishes an annual Corporate Plan and a summary of the main issues. The Plan provides an overview of the Authority's strategic objectives and priorities for improvement and reflects the Authority's corporate planning process.
3. It also includes our achievements against targets for the 2005/06 year and determines priorities and targets for 2006/07 and subsequent years. The Plan must be produced before 30 June 2006 to meet statutory publication requirements. A copy of the Plan is enclosed separately for Members of the Authority and is available to the Public on request.

Corporate Plan 2006/07

4. Production of the Corporate Plan for 2006/07 has been completed. The Plan is principally an internal working document to inform and encourage Managers at all levels of the organisation, to achieve increased effectiveness and efficiency.
5. It is also hoped to influence other agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors that will be looking to this Plan for opportunities to engage in constructive local partnerships. The Best Value elements of this Plan must also be available for scrutiny by the external auditors – PriceWaterhouseCoopers - and by representatives of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
6. Reporting mechanisms are based around this participation, to enable greater internal accountability and focus attention on strategic performance. The content of the Corporate Plan reflects the outcomes from the FRA Service Improvement Workshops, carried out last year and is informed by the results from the Audit Commission Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) findings.
7. In preparing Performance targets for 2006/07, account has been taken of the guidance published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Ministers (ODPM) in recent Fire Service Circulars. These advised Authorities to include targets for the current year and subsequent two years, for all Best Value Performance Indicators. All targets will be set locally, taking into account national priorities and Local Area Agreements reached in partnership with participating agencies.
8. Following approval by the Authority, the Corporate Plan will be widely circulated and also available via the website (www.hwfire.org.uk).

9. The Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee is to consider the Plan on 8 June 2006 and any comments will be reported at the meeting.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Corporate Plan for 2006/07 be adopted.

Background Papers

None

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

PICTURE TO BE ADDED

*Making
Herefordshire
and
Worcestershire
safer from fire
and other
hazards and
improving
community
well-being*

Corporate Plan 2006/07

How to Contact Us

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service welcome all communication from the public we serve. We are interested in your views including complaints or compliments relating to any of the services provided.

You can contact your local Fire Station directly or use any of the methods below:

Please write to: The Chief Fire Officer
Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters
2 Kings Court
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester
WR5 1JR

(FAO Paul Amos)

Or telephone: 0845 12 24454

Email: info@hwfire.org.uk

Website: www.hwfire.org.uk

The website contains a host of further valuable information regarding your Fire and Rescue Service and is proving to be a very popular means of contact.

Contents

Foreword by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Authority

| Why Create a Corporate Plan?

Deleted: Performance

Who We Are

Our Commitment, Our Values, Our Future

Public Satisfaction

Summary of Calls for April 2005 – March 2006

Value for Money

How Have We Performed?

What's Next?

Where are we Going in 06/07 and Why?

Integrated Risk Management Planning

The Corporate Plan

Alignment of the Planning Cycles

Appendix A: Statement of Assurance

Appendix B: Best Value Performance Indicators

Appendix C: Integrated Risk Management Plan 4

Making Herefordshire and Worcestershire Safer

FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUTHORITY

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has just completed its first year with ZERO accidental fire deaths. This follows a five-year downward trend and also follows the trends noticeable in other Community Safety related indicators (such as the total number of fires and accidental fire related injuries).

This is a remarkable achievement for the Service and one that all members of staff can be justifiably proud of. There is no doubt that results such as this do not happen by accident. They are the direct result of the hard work and energy that staff at all levels have put into making our communities safer.

However, this tremendous result for our communities brings with it a new responsibility for the service; that of ensuring that we can turn this single year's achievement into a sustainable long term trend. This can only be achieved by continuously improving our performance over the coming years. Recent investments in community safety and the proposed restructuring of the Service to support more local community safety initiatives, will assist us in engaging with the most vulnerable members of our communities. Whilst maintaining a focus on fire, our community safety and operational response work will also ensure that we drive down the deaths and injuries we see on our roads and on our waterways. This is work the Service is approaching in partnership with other emergency services and agencies to make our communities safer whilst improving community well-being.

The Audit Commission completed its Fire and Rescue Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of all English Fire and Rescue Authorities in July 2005. We have been rated as a "good" Service, with the fourth highest score in the country. This is a very positive result with third party assessors recognising our good standard of performance across the Service. The challenge now is to be recognised as providing excellent services.

This Corporate Plan brings together in one document the key work which the Authority is doing to meet our top priority of making Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer. It's more than a summary of our work and our targets, it is a key part of our detailed planning process which makes sure that the actions required to achieve our aims can be monitored and measured to deliver improvement, deliver success and meet our responsibilities to the community.

Whilst we are rightly proud of our performance over the past year, we are focused on doing even better in the future.

Godfrey Davis
Chairman of the Fire & Rescue Authority

Paul Hayden
Chief Fire Officer

WHY CREATE A CORPORATE PLAN?

The mechanism to inform our stakeholders of our performance

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority have statutory responsibilities laid down in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Local Government Act 1999 to provide an effective, economic and efficient Service. The purpose of this document is to establish the Corporate Plan and planning framework for the year 2006/2007. It is also the Best Value Performance Plan. The Plan details our outturn performance over the past year and includes targets for the current year and subsequent two years.

Corporate Governance

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and appropriate standards and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, elected members and senior managers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

A copy of the signed Authority's Statement of Assurance on Corporate Governance is included at Appendix A.

How the content was developed

A planning workshop was held for Fire and Rescue Authority Members, Officers, Uniformed and Non Uniformed staff and representative bodies in February 2006 to identify and discuss objectives for inclusion in the plan. The workshop considered areas where we are performing well and areas where there is scope for improvement in our performance. This feedback and participation from our external and internal stakeholders helps us to determine the Fire and Rescue Authority strategic direction. Our reporting mechanisms are based around this participation to enable greater internal accountability and focus attention on strategic performance.

Who is this document for?

This plan is principally a working document to inform all our stakeholders of our corporate objectives, our performance to date and develop broader understanding of and commitment to improving the performance of the Service. It takes account of the objectives and targets that the Constituent Authorities have published in their Community Plans. This will enable strategic and local partnership working, which will benefit both residents and visitors to Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

We also hope through this, to influence other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors and create opportunities for them to engage with us in constructive local partnerships. The Best Value elements of this Plan must also be available for scrutiny by our external auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and by representatives of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

You can find further information or contact us via our Service website at:

<http://www.hwfire.org.uk>

WHO ARE WE?

Your Fire and Rescue Service in Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is located in the Heart of England and extends from the metropolitan borders of the West Midlands to the rural southern borderland between England and Wales. The geographical area amounts to some 390,000 hectares and has a total population of around 730,000. It covers two counties, Worcestershire in the east with a population of 549,300 and Herefordshire to the west with 176,900.

Both counties are largely rural, however, Worcestershire's population mainly live in the towns of Worcester, Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Kidderminster, Malvern and Redditch. The east of the County has the M5, M50 and M42 motorways running through it, whilst the south has the Malvern Hills. This is an area of outstanding beauty where emergency calls for rope rescue and potential extensive grass and heath fires pose risks. Another major type of risk encountered is flooding. Four major rivers run through the two counties and recent history has shown the important role the Fire and Rescue Service has played assisting members of the public who are trapped in their homes following severe flooding.

Herefordshire is the second most sparsely populated county in England, having Hereford City as its main commercial, residential and administrative centre with the five market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington providing the other principal centres of population. Both counties are predominantly rural with a wide cross-section of commerce and industry, agricultural, heritage and residential housing.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is constituted under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Fire & Rescue Authority comprises 25 Elected Members, 19 from Worcestershire and 6 from Herefordshire which is a unitary Authority. Worcestershire comprises six district councils. The chair rotates on a bi-annual basis between Herefordshire and Worcestershire. There are 11 Conservatives, 7 Labour, 4 Liberal Democrats and 3 Independent Members. The differing Local Authority structures of the two counties provide both opportunities and challenges in the co-ordination of service delivery.

Fire and Rescue Services, including fire safety activities, are provided from 27 Fire Stations strategically located across the two counties. These services are co-ordinated within three geographical districts which coincide with Local Authority and Police boundaries. The Service has five Wholetime Stations based in the cities of Hereford, Worcester and the three towns of Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch. It also operates three day-crewed Stations in the Worcestershire towns of Malvern, Droitwich and Evesham. The Retained Duty service is mainly based in Herefordshire, with 12 out of the 19 Retained Stations located here. The Fire and Rescue Service has an establishment of 332 Wholetime posts, 369 Retained posts, 21 Fire Control staff and 117 support staff. The Fire and Rescue Authority attends approximately 9,000 emergency incidents each year. The majority of calls for assistance are to fires, road traffic collisions and alerts from automatic alarm systems.

FRA Statutory Officers

Chairman: Cllr Godfrey Davis

Clerk/Monitoring Officer: **TBC**

Vice Chair: Cllr Tom Bean

Treasurer: Mr Mike Weaver

Service Management Team

Chief Fire Officer:	Paul Hayden
Deputy Chief Fire Officer:	Lucy Phillips
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Human Resources):	Mike Redfern
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Safety):	Jon Hall
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Corporate Services):	James McCullagh
Director of Finance:	Martin Reohorn

Service Profile

Area in Hectares:	390,859
Population*:	729804
Fire Stations:	27
Wholetime Uniformed Posts:	332
Retained Uniformed Posts:	369
Control Staff Posts:	21
Non-Uniformed Posts:	117
Operational Vehicles:	61
Revenue Expenditure (outturn):	£27.289m

(Including £0.192m transfer to balances)

*From Office of National Statistics 2004 midyear population estimate

OUR COMMITMENT, OUR VALUES, OUR FUTURE

Our pledge to being a positive, ethical and performing organisation

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is committed to the values of the Fire and Rescue Service. These values are a way of recognising the standard at which we operate, the ethos behind the Service and can act as a template for every employee, in every situation.

The following list of our values displays the spirit in which all personnel pursue our organisational aims and objectives, to ensure that the service we provide is effective, equitable and positively supports the communities we serve.

We Value

Diverse Communities

- We are committed to serving all parts of our communities
- We recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions
- We always fulfil our responsibilities to people, communities and the environment
- We remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve
- We will challenge inappropriate behaviour
- We actively seek feedback

Our People

- We are committed to developing our people
- We build relationships that are based upon mutual trust and respect
- We work in an inclusive way
- We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make
- We respect and see difference as a strength
- We behave in an ethical way
- We promote well-being of others
- We allow empathy to flourish
- We are active and participative listeners
- We communicate with honesty and integrity
- We say 'thank you'

Our Fire and Rescue Service

- We are passionate about building our great reputation
- We make work rewarding and motivating
- We all pull together in the right direction
- We are a team and not a family
- We enjoy and celebrate our work
- We focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities
- We provide the right service at the right time and in the right place

Innovation, Change and Learning

- We encourage critical and lateral thinking and manage constructive challenge
- We take responsibility for improving our performance
- We develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential
- We take responsibility for our actions
- We encourage problem solving at all levels
- We capture good ideas from wherever they originate
- We learn from our experiences

PUBLIC SATISFACTION

What the public thinks of the service they receive

We welcome the opportunity to engage with the people of Herefordshire and Worcestershire about our track record of delivering consistently high quality Fire and Rescue Services and our plans to improve where necessary. This Performance Plan highlights our commitment to improve whilst also providing local residents - who pay for and receive our services - with an opportunity to examine and influence the workings of their Fire and Rescue Service.

Our overall public satisfaction levels remain high. In 2003 we carried out a major public satisfaction survey that showed 70% of people as being satisfied by our overall performance. A similar survey will be carried out this year to reassess our public satisfaction level.

User satisfaction surveys to determine public opinion are conducted on an ongoing basis. The two major quality of service surveys, 'After the Incident' and 'Fire Safety Inspections', are carried out by an independent market research organisation, Opinion Research Services (ORS), using data that enables suitable comparisons with Fire and Rescue Services nationally.

The following table shows the percentages of people which answered the following questions, who were either 'very or fairly satisfied' with the overall service we provided.

Survey Type	Question	% Very Satisfied	% Fairly Satisfied
After the Incident Quality of Service	Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you received from the Fire and Rescue Service?	92% (436 out of 474)	7% (35 out of 474)
After the Inspection Legislative Fire Safety	Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you received from the Fire and Rescue Service?	80% (632 out of 788)	19% (146 out of 788)

We are also using ORS to conduct surveys evaluating Fire Safety talks that operational Firefighters give to children in schools. These results will be analysed on a quarterly and annual basis, with the first year's result due to be published next year.

Following the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in January 2005 the Service received and responded to a number of requests for information, as detailed below:

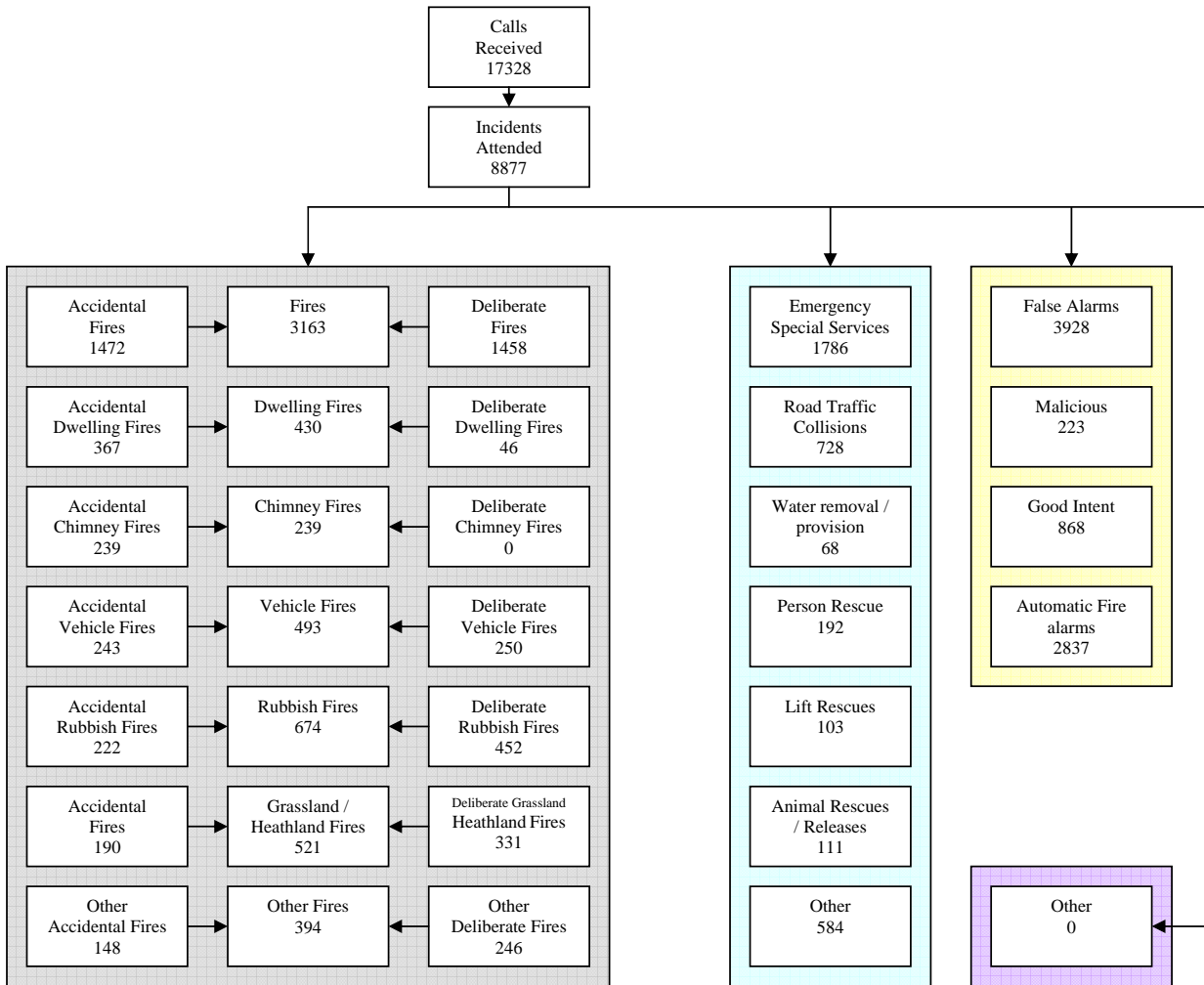
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)	Data Protection Act (DPA)	Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)	Criteria Met (Information located and released or disclosure refused within the statutory timeframe)
76	3	0	100%

The FOIA/DPA/EIR are pieces of legislation designed to provide anyone with a general right of access to information held by the Fire and Rescue Authority. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is happy to receive all requests for information, on any subject. To ensure full compliance, the Service initially considers **all** requests under these Acts/Regulations. The Service does not have to be told why the information is being requested and has up to 20 working days to reply to FOIA requests and up to 40 working days to complete any DPA and EIR enquires.

We maintain a complaints and concerns register and reports are provided to the meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority, for Member scrutiny and comment. During the year 2006/07 we received 40 complaints, all were dealt with in accordance with our complaints procedure. Following a survey of all complaints, 86.7% of those that responded to our question were 'very or fairly satisfied' with the handling of the complaint.

Our target continues to be to encourage further feedback and maintain the high levels of overall satisfaction.

Summary of Calls April 2005 – March 2006



VALUE FOR MONEY

Our funding and how it is used

	2005/06 £m	2006/07 £m
Employees including pension costs (see note)	20.896	21.041
Running Costs	5.287	5.556
Capital Financing	1.245	1.607
Income	(0.268)	(0.207)
Special Grants etc.	(0.350)	(0.838)
Core Budget	26.810	27.159
Transfers to/(from) reserves	0.779	(0.098)
Net Budget Requirement	27.589	27.061

In 2006/07 the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) will spend £27.1m providing a comprehensive emergency service across the two counties, including a 24 hour response. £10.0m will be funded by Central Government grants and the balance (£17.1m) from local Council Tax payers.

For 2006/07 the arrangements for financing Firefighter pensions have changed. This means that the 2006/07 charges are not directly comparable with the 2005/06 ones. As a crude comparison, the 2005/06 figures (and Government Grant) would be around £1.5m lower than shown had the new arrangements been in place.

Compared to the 24 stand-alone FRAs, this Authority has expenditure per citizen that is 94% of the average of the other 23 FRAs but receives the lowest level of Government Grant per citizen at 74% of the average.

As part of the Government's wider Efficiency Agenda, the Fire and Rescue Service nationally is expected to deliver £105m of available savings by 2007/08; this equates to 5.2% of 2004/05 expenditure.

There are no targets set for individual Authorities, as Central Government expected some FRAs to have greater capacity to deliver efficiencies than others.

The FRA has submitted the Annual Efficiency Statement for 2005/06 which indicates that a cashable saving of 4.4% will be achieved by March 2007 and is well on target.

Efficiencies have been created by changing crewing arrangements for aerial appliances; use of Wholetime Retained staff; amendments to officer's day shift patterns; and procurement efficiencies.

Further efficiencies are being created by a major restructuring of the Service to better match the requirements of the IRMP.

Efficiencies are being redirected to improve community safety, particularly in the areas of new statutory responsibility, for example, Road Traffic Collisions and other areas where the FRA wishes to make an impact, for example, water rescue.

Clearly it is important to note that changes affecting the Service will **not** be to the detriment of response times and are focused on service improvement.

Evidence that the efficiencies are genuine efficiencies and not just budget reductions will be given by:

- Council tax increases within actual Government guidelines
- Reasonable assessment of the FRA's use of resources
- Maintenance or improvement to Best Value Performance Indicators (BV's)
 - BV-142 Number of Fires
 - BV-143 Deaths and injuries from Fire
 - BV-206 Number of Deliberate Fires

HOW HAVE WE PERFORMED?

The systems used to measure our performance and what they say about us

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

Fire and Rescue CPA was a corporate assessment which examined how the Authority was being run. It assessed our performance against local and national priorities and reflected the Authority's response to the challenges we face in meeting the needs of the community.

The methodology used a self-assessment, a peer challenge element, specialist assessment teams and key lines of enquiry (KLOE) supported by detailed diagnostic guidance and a rules-based scoring system, to enable judgements to be made.

Fire and Rescue CPA was structured around a set of KLOE covering nine themes. The nine themes examined in this report were: leadership and priorities; a balanced strategy; governance and management; resources and value for money; people; performance management; achievement of objectives; achievement of improvement; and future plans.

Each Fire and Rescue Authority was categorised on a five point scale of 'poor', 'weak', 'fair', 'good' and 'excellent'. The scores for each Authority set a baseline for measuring improvement.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority was rated "good" with a result which places the Authority as joint fourth out of forty seven in the National CPA results table. The Audit Commission reported that the Authority:

- had a strong performance culture, which has led to significant successes including a reduction in accidental dwelling fires of 35 per cent over the past five years;
- had developed key strengths through appointing experienced and committed specialists, particularly in community safety and equality and diversity;
- operated well at a strategic level, taking a risk management approach to determining priorities with plans that relate closely to the Government's national framework; and
- had an effective decision making process, with a good relationship existing between members and senior management.

Annual Audit Letter

As appointed auditors on behalf of the Audit Commission, PwC are required, under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, to issue an Annual Audit Letter to Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority on completion of their audit, demonstrating that the Code's objectives have been addressed and summarising all issues of significance arising from their work.

During the past year, PwC audited our 2005/2006 Performance Plan. The Fire and Rescue Authority was issued with an audit letter within which they stated that:

“We are pleased to note that we did not identify any significant matters of concern to include in our statutory report”.

Chartermark

Hereford & Worcester FRA holds the Chartermark, the Government’s award scheme which recognises and encourages excellence in public service. Chartermark is unique in that it is the only quality scheme that focuses primarily on the needs of those that use public services and is a positive force for change and customer service improvement.

The scheme has changed since we were accredited in 1999. We are now subject to an annual surveillance assessment to maintain our Charter Mark accreditation. As part of the assessment we submitted evidence of work that we carry out, both at the service delivery end but also the wide array of support services that underpin that delivery. Following the surveillance visit we have now have our evaluation report from Charter Mark Assessment Services (CMAS) together with conformation that the Service has:

“demonstrated your service delivery complies to the requirements of Charter Mark Standard”.

We now have **6 areas of Best Practice**, 100% of our evidence was accepted and of that evidence 56 out of 63 areas were seen as conclusive.

However, we must not rest on our laurels, that leaves 7 out of 63 areas where we only partially meet the standards and there are 57 other potential areas of best practice for us to attain.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our intention to improve performance and our primary objectives

Although Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has achieved some tremendous results throughout the last year, we must ensure that this year's achievements are sustainable long term through our vision of:

“Making Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer from fire and other hazards and to improve community well-being.”

In order to achieve this we have developed our strategic objectives:

- To Develop the Organisation;
- To Deliver Quality Services; and
- To Improve Performance and Planning.

These take into account the outcomes from the CPA audit, the Fire and Rescue National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and other National and local issues affecting the Service.

These objectives will be met via the Corporate Plan which is based upon our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

WHERE ARE WE GOING IN 06/07 AND WHY?

The issues that impact on us and their implications for the Service

In developing our objectives we have taken into account the outcomes from the CPA audit, the Fire and Rescue National Framework 06/08, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and other National and local issues affecting the Service.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire and Rescue Services Act represented a comprehensive reform of our statutory framework, placing prevention of fires at the heart of legislation, creating new duties to promote fire safety and powers to work with other partners in the community to deliver this duty.

The Act gave statutory effect to roles the Authority already undertakes, such as attending to road traffic accidents and, by Order and subject to stakeholder consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny, our new responsibilities in relation to terrorist threats and other activities, such as responding to serious flooding.

The Act also gives Fire and Rescue Authorities wide discretion to plan, equip and take action to meet local risks and priorities.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-08

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Services.

- The Government's expectations for the Fire and Rescue Service;
- What Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to do; and
- What support Government will provide.

The Government's new fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for England came into effect on 1 April 2005. The target is:
Reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home by 20% and the number of deliberate fires by 10% by 2010.

Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP)

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority has produced a local IRMP that sets out the Authority's strategy, in collaboration with other agencies, for:

- reducing the number and severity of fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents occurring in the area for which it is responsible;
- reducing the severity of injuries in fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents;
- reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
- safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural); and
- providing value for money.

In preparing our IRMP and deciding the balance of funding and resources we have considered community fire safety, including the priority vulnerable groups in our area.

We are now actively seeking to work jointly with local partners in health, social services, housing, education, the voluntary sector and other emergency services to reduce risk to the vulnerable groups in line with our IRMP through Local Area Agreements.

Authorities must have a fire safety inspection programme which forms part of its IRMP, that prioritise the inspection of places that in the event of a fire would pose a significant risk to life.

Regional Management Board (RMB)

There are operational and organisational challenges for which local Fire and Rescue Authorities working in isolation, will not have the capacity to provide the most efficient, effective and economical response.

Therefore in the interest of co-operating more effectively in relation to the aims, objectives and plans set out by the Government, the Fire and Rescue Authorities of the West Midlands, have established the 'West Midlands Regional Management Board under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972.

This RMB is taking forward six key areas of work

- integrate common and specialist services, for example, fire investigation
- put in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies
- introduce regional personnel and human resource functions
- develop a regional approach to training
- establish regional control centres as an operational priority; and
- introduce regional procurement within the context of the National Procurement Strategy.

Regional Fire Control/Firelink

The Government is progressing with its plans to provide a national network of nine Fire and Rescue Regional Control Centres (RCC) and the procurement and installation of a new national digital radio network system. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has signed an agreement to lease accommodation for eight new RCC's that will be built to DCLC specifications by private developers. The RCC's for the Fire and Rescue Authorities of the West Midlands Region which includes Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority will be located in Wolverhampton.

The West Midlands Regional Management Board is required to establish a Local Authority company that will act as the employing entity for the RCC. This will require employing staff in the new RCC's that will be trained to national standards in nationally agreed roles.

The Civil Contingencies Act

The Act and accompanying regulations and non-legislative measures deliver a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom to meet the challenges of the twenty first century. The Act focuses on three types of threat:

- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare
- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment
- War or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security

Within the Act, we are deemed to be "Category 1" responders, placing a duty on the Service to:

- Assess local risks and use this to inform emergency planning
- Put in place emergency plans
- Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

New Fire Safety legislation will be introduced from autumn 2006 under the RRO, replacing the current range of over 70 different fire related Acts with a single piece of legislation based upon the principle of Fire Safety Workplace Risk assessments. The introduction of the RRO will result in the repeal of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the premises covered by that legislation would no longer require a fire certificate. The new approach will build on that introduced by the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 which placed the responsibility for Fire Safety in commercial premises with the owner/occupier and made it a duty for them to carry out a fire risk assessment.

The Authority will be responsible for enforcement of the RRO via its Risk Based Inspection Programme, which will target those premises most at risk.

Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government and local public sector partners. Many central programmes can be pooled together within an LAA in pursuit of these agreed priorities; next year these will include the Home Fire Risk Check Initiative and fire prevention grant for 2007/08.

Road Traffic Collision Reduction

As well as attending fires, the Service is called to Road Traffic Collisions (RTC), where people are trapped and require rescuing from vehicles.

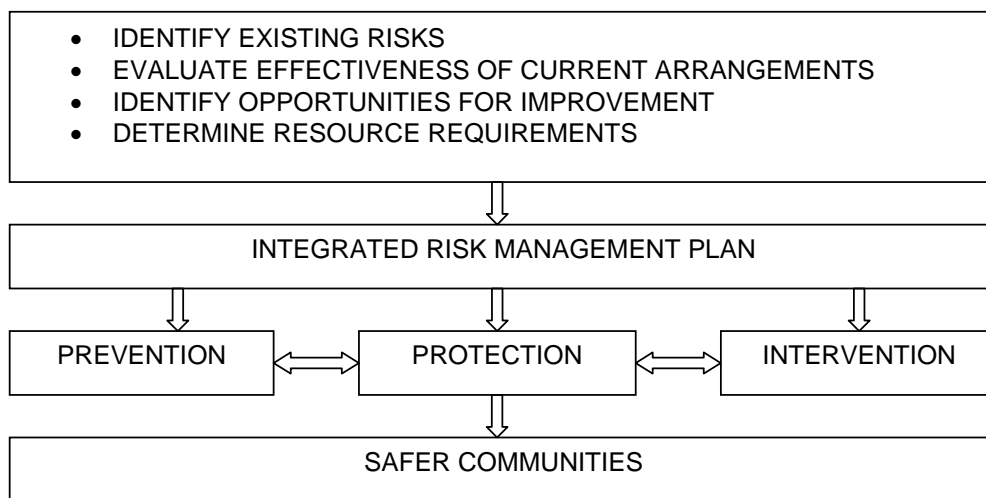
In partnership with the Police and Ambulance Services, Youth Offending Services and Local Authority road safety unit, we have identified the people most likely to be involved in RTC's and are further developing and delivering a "Dying to Drive" package as part of our school education programme. We are planning our RTC strategy to be a particular priority in our IRMP 4, issued for consultation with this document.

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING (IRMP)

Our IRMP process has enabled us to consider the risks within our counties and to identify initiatives to reduce these further where possible; it sets out a broad set of strategic objectives for service improvement, to be delivered over the next 3 years. The plan is balanced, constructive and progressive and represents an intention to realign current resources in order to reduce risk and improve community safety by:

- Strengthening capacity to improve community safety and reduce risk
- Ensuring operational resources are best aligned to areas of greatest risk and need
- Realigning management resources in order to improve support to frontline services
- Updating incident command structures and arrangements to assess operational performance
- Improving support to Fire Stations in rural areas and Firefighters who work the retained duty system
- Preparing for anticipated change to fire safety legislation and enforcement, principally the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order
- Ensuring Fire Stations are appropriately located and have the necessary facilities to provide an efficient, effective and economic service in compliance with our statutory duties

To support our vision the Service has adopted a fully risk managed approach as detailed below:



INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2006/2009

Our 2006/09 IRMP has identified a number of objectives that are in progress or have been delivered and now form part of our day to day activities and are considered to be part of our core activities. A summary of our progress on the objectives set for 2006/07 are reported in Appendix C. Those objectives that are on going will continue to have their progress reported against until they are completed and are contained within our IRMP Action Plan for 2007/08 (Appendix C).

IRMP CONSULTATION

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority IRMP for 2006/09 has undergone extensive consultation with the public, members of the service and other stakeholders in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and a final plan was published in April 2006.

As part of the IRMP process Fire and Rescue Services must produce annual action plans outlining what they intend to achieve. The attached IRMP Draft Action Plan 2007/08 sets out how we intend to achieve our vision of:

“Making Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer from fire and other hazards and to improve community well-being.”

These changes will affect the way we deliver our services to the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Therefore in order to comply with the Governments adopted code of practice for consultations we are commencing a 12 week consultation period which will end on 5th September 2006, where we would welcome consultees to provide the Fire and Rescue Authority feedback on our proposals.

Following the consultation process all responses will be considered and a final action plan will be made available by October 2006. All responses will be made public and will be used in statistical summaries of comments received and views expressed.

All responses should be forwarded by fax, email or post to

Paul Amos, Performance and Planning Manager
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters
2 Kings Court
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester
WR5 1 JR

Tel: 01905 368316
Fax: 01905 357405
Email: pamos@hwfire.org.uk

THE CORPORATE PLAN

This corporate plan describes our strategic objectives. They are Integrated Risk management; People; Support Services; and Organisational Development. A more detailed programme of work is contained within a 5 year performance plan.

Summary of each area of work:

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT

Safer Stronger Communities

Community Safety Strategy

Reduce the number of fires and long-term trends for deaths and injuries to achieve a sustained and consistent decline whilst contributing to community well-being.

Promote a greater knowledge and understanding of risk amongst business and the wider community through effective risk reduction of targeted vulnerable groups.

Road Safety Strategy

Continue to respond to Road Traffic Collisions whilst developing a comprehensive Road Safety Strategy that will result in fewer deaths and injuries on the roads of Hereford and Worcester through intelligence-led intervention, partnerships and improved casualty-handling.

Community Safety Maintenance

Work in partnership with other emergency services, agencies and schools to continue to make our communities safer whilst improving community well-being through continued delivery of safety initiatives.

Operation Assurance

Service Assessment

Prepare and respond positively to the independent assessment of the operational element of service delivery as part of the ongoing national Fire and Rescue Service's CPA programme of assessment for 2006/07. Contribute positively to the self assessment and development of a programme of improvement.

Response Capability

Incident Command and Officers Response Standards

Review the Operational Incident Command System (ICS) including training and monitoring arrangements at all levels. Adjust the number, skills and locations of Officers available for incidents at any one time and publish standards regarding attendance levels.

Flexible Crewing Implementation

Review employee work patterns in order to respond to risks within the community and develop a suite of crewing arrangements to support the requirements of a modern Fire and Rescue Service and IRMP.

Aerial Appliance Review

Review the configuration of the third aerial Appliance at Bromsgrove and seek to improve provision in light of the new Working at Height Regulations.

New Dimensions/USAR

Develop effective Regional and National resilience capabilities whilst having an integrated approach with other agencies to major incidents.

Fire Control/FireLink

Establish a Regional Control Centre and Local Authority Management Company by the end of 2009/10 responsible for call handling and resource mobilising for all Fire and Rescue Services within the West Midlands Region. During the interim, continue to progress our local Fire Control Improvement Strategy, focusing upon resilience, performance management, training and collaboration.

PEOPLE

HR Strategy

Retained Review

Continue implementation of recommendations arising from the 'National Review' Part 1 & 2, through the introduction of appropriate Service improvements.

People Strategy

Develop and deliver an overarching people strategy to establish and develop the human resources function, and to align HR planning process within one framework.

Succession Planning

Development of new and existing systems to provide a more holistic approach to workforce provision. To ensure we have sufficient people in the right place at the right time with the appropriate skills, to meet the current and future needs of the Service.

Implementation of Service Restructure

Introduce and migrate to a role based Service structure through completion of the assimilation process which meets the needs of the organisation as determined by the IRMP/Strategic Objectives.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity

Further develop the service's response to promoting equality and diversity, and maintaining compliance with legislation and Best Practice guidance by continued progression of activity within the Services' Equality and Diversity Strategy. Promote Equality and Diversity principles by mainstreaming objectives and providing planned training.

Organisational Capacity

Implementation Strategy Programme Management Recommendations (SPM)

Strengthen and deliver improvement in approaches to strategic programme and project management and enhance service capacity and capability and support to priority areas.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Risk Management

Corporate Risk Management

Review the strategic risk register which integrates revised departmental risk registers into Business Continuity plans. Develop monitoring and reporting systems to facilitate the effective management of risk across the Service that fully integrates effective Business Continuity plans.

Asset Management

Strategy Property Management

Complete the review and develop the Service's Asset Management Plan to align the Property strategy with the outcomes of the FSEC review. Rebase and update the Service's planned maintenance programme, in-line with (ODPM) guidance.

Fleet Management

Deliver the planned schedule of vehicle servicing, procurement of new Service vehicles and review operating practices and stock holding to seek efficiencies and collaboration within the region.

ICT Strategy

Develop the organisational culture of electronic working and support this through the implementation of an improved ICT infrastructure. This will provide more efficient communications and information access resulting in increased use of ICT across the organisation.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management

Establish a central information resource (including data, systems and people) which will draw together current dispersed information sources and allow a full range of data and information to be available across the Service to supporting staff more effectively in their roles.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Performance Excellence

Performance Review

Implement an information technology based performance/project management system that will support all service delivery functions and encourage the development of a culture of performance excellence across the Service.

Use of Resources

Deliver a strong performance against the Audit Commission's Use of Resources assessment through good preparation and undertake a review of current position.

IRMP4

To produce an IRMP Annual Action Plan for 2007/08 from the overall aims of the 3 year IRMP for issue in September 2006, in-line with the corporate objective to improve the alignment of business planning processes.

Governing Partnership Review

Review the Partnership Working Policy and practices to ensure delivery of best practice, through using the Audit Commission's governing partnerships checklist and recommendations. Ensure full adoption and implementation of a Service-wide approach to Partnership Working which supports improved services to local communities and commitment to value for money.

Communications

Communications Strategy

Engage positively with all stakeholders through auditing existing communications and the development of a focused communication strategy. Modernise corporate branding that reflects organisational values and ambitions.

Culture

Culture

Develop and define the culture of the organisation to reflect modern Fire Service values, auditing the organisational culture through engagement with stakeholder groups, and delivering change.

*See Figure on following page

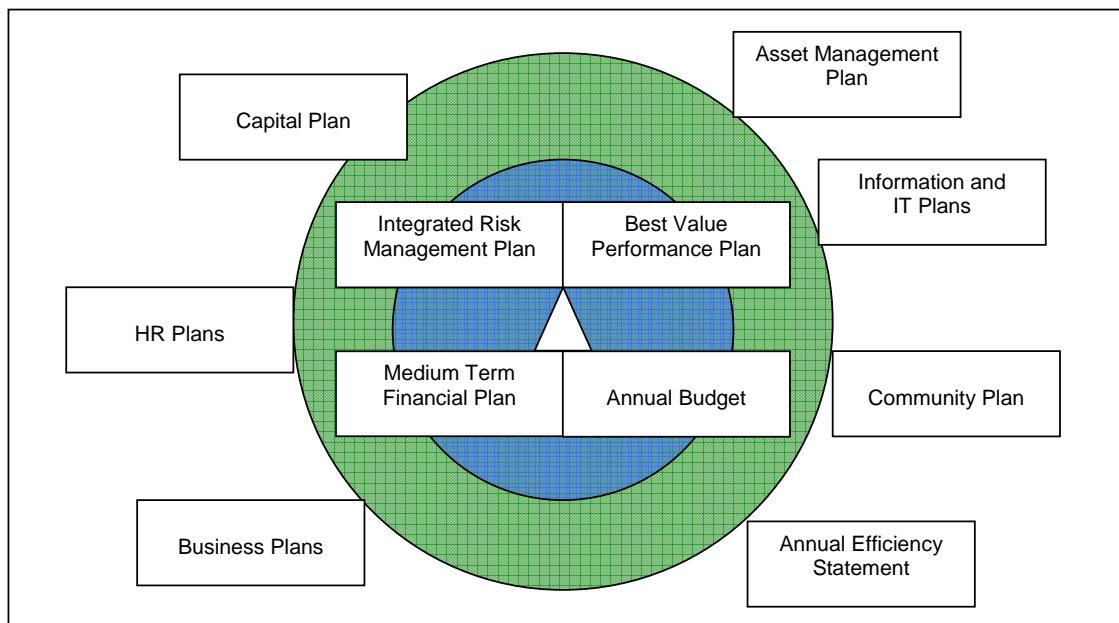
ALIGNMENT OF THE PLANNING CYCLES

An Overview of the Strategic Planning Timetable and Process

PwC has undertaken a review of our key planning processes in order to align the following:

- Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP);
- Annual Budget and Financial Plan; and
- Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Overview of the key plans

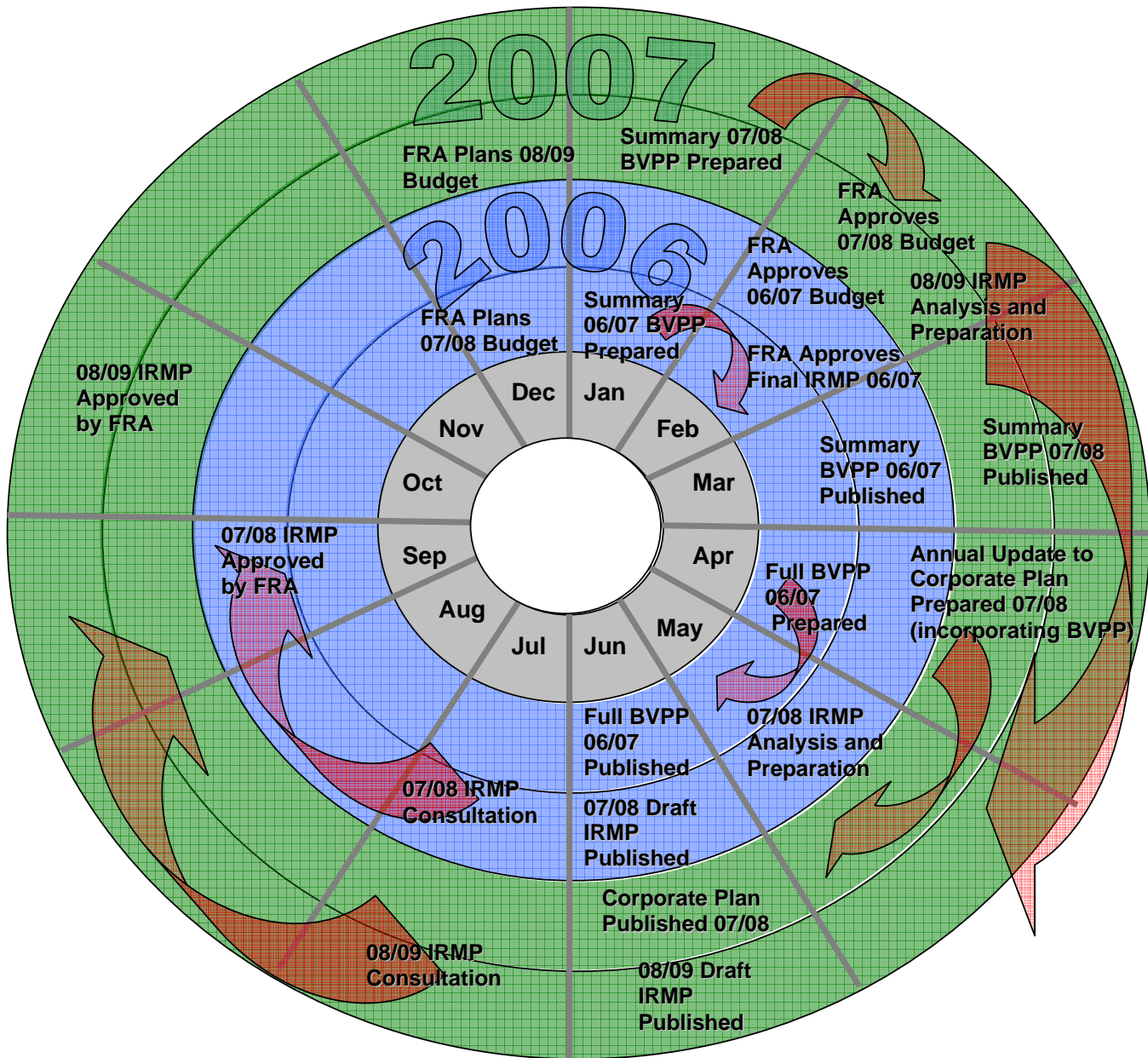


The review has examined the four plans in the circle and how these can be brought together in a more integrated approach.

Benefits of the new approach

- The draft IRMP could be published alongside the final BVPP, which itself can be integrated into a wider corporate plan enabling a more joined up approach within the organisation, giving greater emphasis to the organisational planning process to key stakeholders and interest groups, for example, Audit Commission and the Government Office.
- Consultation on the IRMP would be completed before the annual budget cycle begins, enabling the Authority to take full account of the resources implications of the IRMP in the financial year.
- The Authority would be better placed to respond to IRMP consultation allowing time to amend the plan before approval of the final budget.

- The financial impact statement produced by the Director of Finance in relation to implementing the IRMP can be built into the budget more effect.



Building On Success

The Government's proposals for 2006/07 are for a Fire and Rescue Performance Framework that builds upon the Fire and Rescue CPA judgement and measures improvement, or regression, from that baseline. The proposals are for three elements in the performance framework for 2006/07: use of resources, direction of travel and Service assessment.

The Fire and Rescue Authority will carry out a self-assessment for the Service Assessment part of the inspection in June and will be subject to review by a team of Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate assessors in August. The West Midlands Regional Management Board (RMB) has initiated a project to develop a Regional response to the operational assurance process based upon the draft KLOES, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has acted by contributing to that project and by carrying out a preliminary self-assessment. The Regional Management Board project requires the Authority to contribute to a team of assessors, who will undertake out a peer challenge in each Authority following the self-assessment. Further assessments will be held for the use of resources and direction of travel parts of the framework later in the year.

APPENDIX A - CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF CONTRACTS INVOLVING A TRANSFER OF STAFF

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority has not been party to any contracts, involving the transfer of staff during 2005/06.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE - CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, Members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

To this end, the Authority has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of and reflects the requirements of CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) framework "Corporate Governance in Local Government: a Keystone for Community Governance". A copy of the Authority's Code is available on the Service's website (www.hwfire.org.uk) or can be obtained on request from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1JR.

During the year 2005-06, the Authority has reviewed and consolidated appropriate management and reporting arrangements, to enable it to satisfy itself that its approach to Corporate Governance is both adequate and effective in practice. Specifically it has given the Clerk to the Authority the responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Code, reviewing its operation in practice and reporting annually to the Authority on compliance with the Code and any changes that may be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness.

In addition, the Authority's Treasurer (through his internal audit service) has been given the responsibility to review independently and report to the Authority annually, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Code and the extent of compliance with it. On the basis of the reports of the Clerk and the Treasurer arising from their reviews of the Authority's Corporate Governance arrangements, we are satisfied that these are adequate and operating effectively.

The Authority is seeking to continually improve the effectiveness of its arrangements for the governance of the Authority's affairs. We will review continued compliance with the Code as part of our next annual review.

[Signed:]

Cllr G Davis

Chair

P Hayden

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Date:

APPENDIX B: BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

How we have done against our targets and our targets over the next three years

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 144	Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin	92.0	91	92.0	92.4	92.9	93.3

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 146i & 146ii	Number of malicious calls attended and unattended per 1,000 population	0.23 0.28	0.25 0.26	0.32 0.31	0.34 0.21	0.37 0.16	0.39 0.11

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 142ii	Number of primary fires in dwellings per 10,000 population	20.4	20	18.3	15.9	13.5	11.0
BV 142iii	Number of accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 population	12.3	12.75	12.05	10.8	9.3	8.0
BV 143i	Number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	0.27	0.27	0.00	0.32	0.31	0.29
BV 143ii	Number of injuries from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	5.1	5.0	3.6	2.5	1.45	0.4
BV 208	Percentage of people escaped unharmed from accidental dwelling fires without FRA assistance	93.2	94	93.6	93.7	93.8	93.9
BV 209i	Percentage of fires in dwellings where smoke alarms activated	34.6	36	35.6	36.2	37.2	38.1
BV 209ii	Percentage of fires in dwellings where smoke alarms did not activate	12.2	11.5	10.1	9.7	9.5	9.1
BV 209iii	Percentage of fires in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted	58.8	53.2	54.6	52.5	50.4	48.4

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 149i	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non domestic properties	115.0	95	100	94	87	79
BV 149ii	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection more than one attendance	320	300	366	349	332	315
BV 149iii	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection – percentage of calls to a property with more than one attendance	74.3	53(#)	74.9	70	65	60
BV 206i	Deliberate primary fires (exc vehicles) per 10,000 population	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.0	1.49	0.92
BV 206ii	Deliberate primary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	4.8	4.6	3.7	2.8	1.9	1.1
BV 206iii	Deliberate secondary fires (exc vehicles) per 10,000 population	16.3	15.8	15.9	14.2	12.6	11
BV 206iv	Deliberate secondary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	0.7	0.65	0.52	0.4	0.39	0.18
BV 207	Fires in non-domestic premises per 1,000	9.5	9.0	10.0	9.0	7.9	6.7

(#) original target set on incorrect data

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 2a	The equality standard for Local Government	3	4	3	4	4	4
BV 2b	The duty to promote race equality	74	100	89	100	100	100
BV 11i	Top 5% earners that are women	4.5	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
BV 11ii	Top 5% earners from ethnic minority communities	0.0	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
BV 11iii	Top 5% earners that have a disability	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.2	4.2	4.2
BV 16ai	Percentage of Wholetime and Retained Duty System employees with a disability	NR	-	0.1	0.2	0.3	0
BV 16aai	Percentage of control and non-uniformed employees with a disability	NR	-	0.0	0.2	0.4	0
BV 16b	Percentage of the economically active population in the Authority area who have a disability	12.6	-	12.6	-	-	-
BV 17a	Percentage of uniformed staff from ethnic minority communities	0.7	1.1	0.71	1.2	1.7	2.2
BV 17b	Percentage of economically active (persons aged 18-54) population from ethnic minority communities in the authority area	2.2	-	2.2	-	-	-
BV 210	Percentage of female Firefighters	3.7	4.9	5.02	5.5	5.9	6.4

Deleted: 3.15
Deleted: 6.3
Deleted: 9.45
Deleted: 3.15
Deleted: 6.3
Deleted: 9.45

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
Local Indicator 145a	Percentage of calls to fires at which number of fire appliances met standards of fire cover	99.7	-	99.7	National Standards for Fire Cover no longer apply from 1 April 2004 FRS will continue to monitor performance against national standards, whilst the Authority develops this element with the IRMP		
Local Indicator 145b	Percentage of calls to fires at which number of Firefighters on fire appliances met standards	96.0	-	92.4			
Local Indicator 145c	Percentage of calls to fires at which the national standards for fire appliance response times were met	96.3	-	96.5			

Indicator No:	Performance Measure	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	08/09 Target
BV 12i	Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by Wholetime uniformed staff	9.5	6.4	9.16	8.7	8.24	7.5
BV 12ii	Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff	9.2	8.3	8.46	8.04	7.62	7.0
BV 15i	Wholetime Firefighters ill-health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0.3	0.7	1.23	0.3	0.0	0.0
BV 15ii	Control and non-uniformed ill-health retirements as a percentage of the total workforce	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Deleted: 9.12

Deleted: 9.10

Deleted: 9.08

Deleted: 55

Deleted: 7.1

Deleted: 1.0

Deleted: 7

Deleted: 7

Deleted: 7

Deleted: 7

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 3	% of citizens satisfied by the overall service provided the Authority	NR	NR	NR	80	-	-
BV 4	Percentage of persons making complaints satisfied with the handling of those complaints	NR	NR	86.6	95	-	-

These two indicators are triennial indicators to be collected in 2006/07

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 8	Percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days	95.1	100	91	100	100	100

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 157	% of interactions enabled for electronic delivery as percentage of interactions legally permissible	79.0	100	81.0	100	100	100

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
Local Indicator	Efficiency Gains (%)	-	3.2	4.4	3.6	5.0	7.5

Indicator No:	Performance Indicator:	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Estimate	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
BV 150	Expenditure per head of population on the provision of Fire and Rescue Services (£)	31.9	38.32	35.23	36.44	38.60	39.92

APPENDIX C: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2006/09

Integrated Risk Management Action Plan 2006/07 Summary of Performance

	Review of Retained Management and Support
Objective	To provide efficient and effective managerial support and assistance to Retained Stations throughout the Service area, thereby improving the health and safety of our staff and improving our ability to deliver community safety in rural areas.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce 6 Community Risk Managers; • Disestablish 2 Retained Liaison Officer posts in West District when the full range of Community Risk Managers is implemented.
Deliverable	This element of IRMP will be delivered as part of the organisational restructure. It will provide the additional resources required to improve support to Retained Duty System Stations; a programme of action is in place and this element of the restructure is due to be delivered by September 2006.
	Incident Command and Officers Response Standards
Objective	To provide the optimum number of flexible duty staff to facilitate safe systems of work in accordance with national incident command models at operational incidents.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop operational performance review to ensure we are providing an efficient and effective service. • Reduce the number of Flexible Duty System posts within the organisation from 43 to 32 over time and develop an operational rota to support the requirements of Incident Command • Re-allocate vacancies that occur within the Flexible Duty System to day duty or other posts in accordance with this IRMP and our People Strategy. • Put in place systems that ensure Officers are competent to undertake the command roles required of them.
Deliverable	Good progress has been made: a project plan in place and a new rota has now been developed. This project has now been incorporated within the 06/07 Corporate objective to review the incident command system.
	Flexible Crewing Implementation
Objective	To improve the emergency risk cover that is provided to Redditch, Kidderminster and the surrounding area thereby increasing public safety.
Outcome	Pilot new work patterns at Redditch with flexibility to extend the trial to other Stations. This will provide the Fire and Rescue Authority with a range of flexible crewing options to enable fire appliances to be crewed to meet the demands and risks within the service area. The work patterns will provide improved response times to incidents and offer flexible working opportunities for our staff. Their impact will be closely monitored and any permanent recommendations referred to the Fire and Rescue Authority in due course.
Deliverable	This objective has also been incorporated within the Corporate action plan item on flexible crewing. A project plan has been agreed, and a pilot at Redditch is due to commence in July 2006. An update report on this project will be made to the September FRA

	Fire Safety Review
Objective	To prepare Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to meet the implications arising from the anticipated Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order and other relevant known changes to Fire Safety duties.
Outcome	Introduce role map compliant structure of Fire Safety Inspectors (Level 3) and Fire Safety Managers (Level 4). Uniformed or Non-Uniformed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain current geographic Fire Safety delivery using coterminous local authority boundaries. Bolster existing performance management and introduce specific risk reduction targets • Modify Fire Safety role structure (flexi duty determined by ICS rota). Improve succession planning and increase Fire Safety productivity (to support risk based inspections and community safety activity)
Deliverable	New software has been purchased to aid service delivery by Technical Fire Safety Staff following CFOA National Protocols. This software will also enhance the risk based inspection programme; a key part of the response to the Regulatory Response Order. The organisational structure changes to support this objective are due to be completed by September 2006 Fire Safety Officers have received Risk Based Inspection training based on national best practice

Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08

	Future Response and Intervention Arrangements/ Review of Emergency Cover
Objective	Continue to review the Fire and Rescue Service risk area to determine the resources and local response standards required to the identified risk.
Outcome	To provide the most efficient, effective and economic emergency cover provision to the communities of Hereford and Worcestershire.
Deliverable	Benefits that will accrue from our proposals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction of fire losses in domestic and commercial properties; ▪ Reduction of fatalities and casualties at all emergency incidents; ▪ Increased capacity to deliver Home Fire Safety Checks in Redditch and the surrounding area; and ▪ Introduction of new duty patterns for staff.
	Flexible Crewing Implementation
Objective	Review employee work patterns in order to respond to risks within the community. The review will consider flexible working, part-time working, voluntary overtime and the development of duty systems that will enable the Service to deliver an efficient and effective service
Outcome	Development of a suite of crewing arrangements to support the requirements of a modern fire and rescue service and IRMP
Deliverable	Pilot new work patterns at Redditch Fire Station with the flexibility to extend the trials to further stations. This will provide the Fire and Rescue Authority further opportunities to consider the benefits from variable crewing options to deliver service improvement. A report

	will be submitted to the FRA.
	Road Safety
Objective	Develop a comprehensive Road Safety Strategy in line with new responsibilities under the F&RS Act 2004. Continue to respond to Road Traffic Collisions in accordance with current policy.
Outcome	Increased efficiency at Road Traffic Collisions through intelligence-led intervention and improved casualty-based qualitative performance indicators Fewer deaths and injuries on the roads of Hereford & Worcester through improved education programmes.
Deliverable	Review intervention strategies including methodologies, equipment and training Progress partnership arrangements with West Mercia Police and Primary Care Trusts within Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Identify and progress partnerships arrangements with other agencies to raise public awareness of road safety having established priorities for action within Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Identify opportunities available to raise road safety awareness amongst 'at risk' groups through community education. Develop education packages. Integrate key safety objectives with those of local, regional and national partners.
	New Dimensions/Civil Contingencies/ CBRN/Environmental
Objective	Continue to provide an emergency response to incidents involving hazardous materials but seeking to reduce the number of incidents at which action is taken based upon risk to life and/or the environment. To develop a more robust means of recovering costs outside of those incurred for emergency action.
Outcome	Increased time available for attendance at other incident types and Community Safety activities; Reduced costs incurred through incident attendance; Reduced risk to responding Fire-fighters and other road users; Regional and National resilience capability; Integrated approach with other agencies to major incidents; Promotion of the prevention of incidents and the action to take in the case of an incident occurring; Promotion of business continuity.
Deliverable	New Dimensions: Develop Urban Search and Rescue team, PPE, accommodation and training implementation plan. Determine appropriate attendances for Urban Search and Rescue equipment at non-New Dimension incidents. Complete site specific plans for Urban Search and Rescue. Establish New Dimension equipment mutual assistance protocols with neighbouring services. Raise awareness of Urban Search and Rescue amongst partner organisations. CBRN: Establish emergency call management protocols to reduce attendances at such incidents as appropriate. Establish cost recovery mechanisms and identify alternatives for use. Develop cost recovery protocols. Confirm scale of charges and calculation methodology. Implement cost recovery mechanisms. Raise awareness of cost recovery and call management protocols

	<p>with partner agencies. Establish and cascade training. Monitor effectiveness of introduced cost recovery mechanisms and establish cost/benefit analysis for continued implementation. Civil Contingencies Act: Ensure Community Risk Register Plans are reviewed regularly. Develop plans appropriate to Fire Service attendance at all identified generic risks established on the Community Risk Register. Develop a business continuity plan for operations. Establish joint exercises to review learning and further development needs within identified high-risk priority incidents. Environmental: Establish operations environmental impact reduction alternatives. Continue the publication of the identified priority environmental information on the VMDS.</p>
	Community Safety Strategy
Objective	<p>To develop our Community Safety strategies to incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Safety in all environments • Road Safety • Water Safety • Home Safety
Outcome	<p>Reduced number of fires, long-term trends for deaths and injuries to achieve a sustained and consistent decline. We will achieve linkage for our key safety objectives with those of national, regional and local partners and contribute to improvement in community well-being. We will promote greater knowledge and understanding of risk amongst business and the wider community. This will be achieved through effective risk reduction of targeted vulnerable groups.</p>
Deliverable	<p>Review targeted deliver of Audit of premises following introduction of the Fire Safety Order to meet the erosion of risk concept. Deliver resources to partners in order to promote road, water and home safety which will complement our fire safety campaigns whilst continuing to achieve LPSA 2 milestones and trends. Consider options for Community Safety Centres within the scope of the Asset Management Plan following IRMP/FSEC outcomes. Identify best practice locally and use data from Government to include that provided through a centrally funded good practice programme.</p>
	Community Safety Maintenance
Objective	<p>To deliver on the following individual projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Outreach ○ Schools Fire Safety Education Programme ○ Home Fire Safety Checks ○ Arson Prevention ○ Sprinklers – Domestic and in Schools ○ Domestic Smoke Alarms ○ Fire Safety Training Programme for the Business Community
Outcome	<p>To work in partnership with other emergency services, agencies and schools to make our communities safer whilst improving community well-being. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved partnership arrangements resulting in greater access to minority and hard to reach groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase young peoples' knowledge and awareness about the dangers associated with fire and reduce anti-social fire related behaviour • Reduce accidental dwelling fires, reduce casualties and fatalities resulting from dwelling fires and accidents in the home • Reduce the number of deliberately set fires and diminish the negative impact of arson on local communities • Increase the knowledge and awareness of the life-saving potential of sprinklers in homes. Reduce the impact and devastation caused by fires in schools • Reduce the number and severity of casualties and fatalities in dwelling fires • Increase the knowledge and understanding of risk amongst the business community
Deliverable	<p>Ensure each points from the individual project plans are progressed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a risk based initiative that contributes to the overall aim of reducing social exclusion service wide • Review existing school packages to ensure currency; role out water safety awareness training and refresher "Dying to Drive" programmes to both counties • Review HFSC process once feedback for a full year of data has been provided; expand HFSC content to incorporate a wider home safety concerns on a themed basis • Further develop RMB Fire investigation / Arson joint working practises • Ensure LFS and CFS staff receive specialist training on sprinkler systems; engage with business community and insurance industry to raise awareness of the benefits of sprinklers • Confirm fitting of specialist smoke alarms; identify those alarms which have not received 10 year alarms and progress possible revisits and battery replacement schemes • Ensure the new Service structure is supported at Cluster level with core competent skill sets; liaise with business community to raise awareness of impact of Fire Safety Order, make advice, information, guidance available on Service Internet site; role out training to wholetime and retained staff on passive and active fire safety measures
	Implementation of Service Re-structure (People)
Objective	Migrate to a role based Service structure which meets the needs of the organisation as determined by the IRMP/ strategic objectives.
Outcome	Completion of assimilation process. New organisational structure introduced.
Deliverable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review role based structure in line with developing IRMP and make appropriate recommendations for further adjustments • Consider and recommend further change to structure arising from the human resources outcomes of the 2007 review of the National pay agreement for firefighters, as appropriate.

Relocation/Development of Fire Stations	
Objective	Having considered a range of implications we are proposing to relocate and build a number of Fire Stations throughout our counties. The situation and reasons for proposing to relocate and build new Fire Stations are specific to each site. Further information is available in our Asset Management Plan.
Outcome	The relocation of specific Fire Stations will improve our service provision to local communities whilst at the same time providing modern arrangements for our staff including operational, training and community safety facilities.
Deliverable	Fire Station developments will be progressed as a core element of our long term property management strategy.

Low Priority and Non Priority Objectives

Since the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan which set out a range of strategic objectives to be delivered over the period 2006-09, a comprehensive review of our IRMP has been undertaken to determine both existing and potential risks to the community, which has resulted in the following IRMP objectives being determined as low or non priority objectives. A number of these low priority objectives will still be delivered over the period of the plan but have been devolved into departmental plans.

Non Emergency Special Service Calls	
Objective	Review our attendance at non-emergency special service incidents including Fuel Spillages, Lift Incidents and Lockouts
Automatic Fire Alarms	
Objective	Work with the business community to reduce unwanted fire signals and develop our response options with the primary objectives of significantly reducing attendees to false alarms from AFA systems.
Incidents Involving Animal Rescue	
Objective	Continue to attend animal rescues where it is confirmed that an animal's life is at risk or the animal is known to be suffering. We will also consider opportunities, particularly with the RSPCA
Damage Mitigation	
Objective	Carry out a full feasibility study to determine the benefits to the community from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service working in partnership with commercial organisations for the purpose of damage mitigation
Positive Pressure Attack	
Objective	Develop appropriate operational procedures, safe systems of work, equipment and training programmes to introduce Positive Pressure Attack
Fire Safety Review	
Objective	Implement the requirements of the new legislation placed upon the Authority

Outstanding Objectives IRMP 2004 /05

The table below lists the outstanding objective from 2004/05 and the actions that have taken place during 2005/06.

Aerial Appliances	
Objective	Maintain three Aerial Appliances in the Service but change the existing crewing arrangements to a system that involves crewing the appliances only when they are required. Review the requirement for the third aerial appliance at Bromsgrove in light of the new Working at Height Regulations.
Outcome	To maintain operational efficiency and increase firefighter safety whilst improving value for money
Delivered	Aerial appliance tender produced and issued. Tender returns evaluated and contract awarded.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<p>A&B Audit & Budget Committee ACAS Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service ACO Assistant Chief Fire Officer AFA Automatic Fire Alarm AFD Automatic Fire Detection BA Breathing Apparatus BCC Brigade Command Course T&DC Training and Development Centre BVC Best Value Committee BV Best Value Performance Indicator BVP&P Best Value Policy & Performance CC County Council CCBRN Conventional Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear CERMIG County Emergency Response to Major Incidents Group CFBAC Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council CFO Chief Fire Officer CFOA Chief Fire Officers Association CFS Community Fire Safety CIMAH Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards CIPFA The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy COSHH Control of Substances Hazardous to Health CPA Comprehensive Performance Assessment CRE Commission for Racial Equality DC District Commander DCFO Deputy Chief Fire Officer DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government DCOL Dear Chief Officer Letter DDA Disability Discrimination Act DHQ District Headquarters DO Divisional Officer DOCS Director of Corporate Services DoH Department of Health DOF Director of Finance DOI Divisional Officer Grade I DTI Department of Trade and Industry DTLR Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions EPU Environmental Protection Unit FAWAG Fairness at Work Advisory Group FBU Fire Brigades Union FCOp Fire Control Operator FDS Flexible Duty System FRA Fire and Rescue Authority FRS Fire and Rescue Service FSC Fire Service Circular/Fire Service College FSCA Fire Service Consultation Association FSEC Fire Service Emergency Cover FSPA Fire Service Procurement Association HFSC Home Fire Safety Check HMFSI Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate HMI Her Majesty's Inspector or Inspectorate</p>	<p>HR Human Resource HSE Health & Safety Executive ICS Incident Command System IIP Investors in People IOSH Institute of Occupation Safety and Health IPDS Integrated Personal Development System IRMP Integrated Risk Management Plans ISU Incident Support Unit IT Information Technology LFF Leading Firefighter LGA Local Government Association LPSA Local Public Service Agreement LSGCM Long Service and Good Conduct Medal MARP Midlands Area Radio Project MIS Management Information Systems MoU Memorandum of Understanding NCFSC National Community Fire Safety Campaign NEBOSH National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health NJC National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades NVQ National Vocational Qualification ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister ORS Opinion Research Services PDR Personal Development Review PFI Private Finance Initiative PI Performance Indicator PMM Principal Management Meeting PO Principal Officer PPE Personal Protective Equipment PSA Public Service Agreement PSRP Public Services Radio Project QSA Quality Systems Audit RIDDOR Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation RMB Regional Management Board RoSPA Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents RTC Road Traffic Collision SC Standards Committee SCA Supplementary Credit Approval SDA Service Delivery Agreement SFSA Senior Fire Safety Officer SHEBA Safety in the Home and Electric Under Blanket Assessment SLA Service Level Agreement SOLACE Society of Local Authority Chief Executives SORP Statement of Recommended Practice SSA Standard Spending Assessment SSI Special Service Incidents UDC Urgent Decisions Committee VMDS Vehicle Mounted Data System WAN Wide Area Network WMRHSG West Midlands Regional Health and Safety Group YFA Young Firefighters' Association</p>
---	---

13. IRMP PROGRESS UPDATE

Purpose of report

1. To provide a progress report on the IRMP action plan for 2006/07.
-

Background

2. The IRMP for 2006/2009 contains an action plan detailing objectives to be completed during the financial year 2006/07.
3. The attached paper details the progress of the Service towards achieving these objectives.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the progress report of the 2006/07 IRMP be noted.

Background papers

None

Objective	Action	Progress
<p>1. To provide efficient and effective managerial support and assistance to Retained Stations throughout the Service area, thereby improving the health and safety of our staff and improving our ability to deliver community safety in rural areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce 6 Community Risk Managers • Disestablish 2 Retained Liaison Officer posts in West District when the full range of Community Risk Managers is implemented. 	<p>This element of IRMP will be delivered as part of the organisational restructure. This will provide the additional resources required to improve support to Retained Duty System Stations.</p>
<p>2. To provide the optimum number of flexible duty staff to facilitate safe systems of work in accordance with national incident command models at operational incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop operational performance review to ensure we are providing an efficient and effective service. • Reduce the number of Flexible Duty System posts within the organisation from 43 to 32 over time and develop an operational rota to support the requirements of Incident Command • Re-allocate vacancies that occur within the Flexible Duty System to day duty or other posts in accordance with this IRMP and our People Strategy. • Put in place systems that ensure Officers are competent to undertake the command roles required of them. 	<p>A project plan has now been developed, which will look closely at these objectives. This project has now been incorporated within the 06/07 Corporate objective to review the incident command system.</p>

Objective	Action	Progress
<p>3. To improve the emergency risk cover that is provided to Redditch, Kidderminster and the surrounding area thereby increasing public safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot new work patterns at Redditch with flexibility to extend the trial to other Stations. This will provide the Fire and Rescue Authority with a range of flexible crewing options to enable fire appliances to be crewed to meet the demands and risks within the service area. The work patterns will provide improved response times to incidents and offer flexible working opportunities for our staff. Their impact will be closely monitored and any permanent recommendations referred to the Fire and Rescue Authority in due course. 	<p>This objective has also been incorporated within the Corporate action plan item on flexible crewing. A project plan has been agreed and a report will be made to the September FRA Meeting.</p>
<p>4. To prepare Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to meet the implications arising from the anticipated Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order and other relevant known changes to Fire Safety duties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce role map compliant structure of Fire Safety Inspectors (Level 3) and Fire Safety Managers (Level 4). Uniformed or Non-Uniformed • Maintain current geographic Fire Safety delivery using coterminous local authority boundaries. Bolster existing performance management and introduce specific risk reduction targets • Modify Fire Safety role structure (flexi duty determined by ICS rota). Improve succession planning and increase Fire Safety productivity (to support risk based inspections and community safety activity) • Build on existing RBIP. Research options for improved IT system to provide dynamic management tool for targeting risk. Incorporate national guidance and enforcement protocols. Introduce trend responsiveness (fires, risk elements, degradation of standards). Sample audits for all risk levels • Modify existing Fire Safety structure to provide a more efficient, responsive, risk focused approach that addresses projected workload and supports IPDS and IRMP requirements • Introduce new role of day duty Fire Safety Station Manager. 	<p>New software has been purchased to aid service delivery by Technical Fire Safety Staff following CFOA National Protocols. This software will also enhance the risk based inspection programme; a key part of the response to the Regulatory Response Order.</p> <p>The human resource element of this objective is part of the organisational re-structure.</p> <p>Fire Safety Officers have received Risk Based Inspection training based on National Best Practice.</p>

14. DRAFT 2007 – 2008 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) Annual Action Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' approval of the Fire and Rescue Authority's draft 2007 – 2008 IRMP Annual Action Plan for consultation.
-

Background

2. Fire Service Circular 7/2003 required the Fire and Rescue Authority to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan.
3. The Fire and Rescue National Framework states that all Fire and Rescue Services must produce an IRMP. The Framework also states that Fire and Rescue Authorities should produce Annual Action Plans on which they have fully consulted with their local communities, allowing twelve weeks for consultation.
4. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 clause 21(7) states that Fire and Rescue Services must have regard to the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework in carrying out their function.

Draft 2007 – 2008 IRMP Action Plan

5. The 2006 – 2009 draft IRMP was developed under the leadership of the FRA IRMP Steering Group and contains updates on progress made to date regarding objectives contained in the original 2004/05 IRMP. Many of the original objectives have either been completed or become Statutory Duties under the new Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and are now core activities for the Service.
6. Objectives due to be completed next year are contained in the 2007/08 Annual Action Plan.
7. The draft IRMP action plan has previously been forwarded to Members as part of the Corporate Plan. This element of the Corporate Plan still reflects the principles of the main IRMP:
 - Strengthen our capacity to improve community safety and reduce risk
 - Ensure that our operational resources are best aligned to areas of greatest risk and need
 - Realign management resources in order to improve support to frontline services
 - Update our Incident Command structures and arrangements to assess operational performance
 - Provide improved support to our Fire Stations in rural areas and those Firefighters who work the Retained Duty System
 - Prepare for anticipated changes to fire safety legislation and enforcement, principally the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order; and

- Ensure that our Fire Stations are appropriately located and have the necessary facilities to provide an efficient, effective and economic service in compliance with our statutory duties.

8. The Action Plan contains objectives relating to the following:

- Review of Retained Management and Support
- Incident Command and Officers Response Standards
- Flexible Crewing Implementation
- Fire Safety Review
- Future Response and Intervention Arrangements/Review of Emergency Cover
- Flexible Crewing Implementation
- Road Safety
- New Dimensions/Civil Contingencies
- CBRN/Environmental
- Community Safety Strategy
- Community Safety Maintenance
- Implementation of Service Re-structure (People)
- Relocation/Development of Fire Stations

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Fire and Rescue Authority's draft 2007 – 2008 IRMP Annual Action Plan be approved for consultation.

Background Papers

Fire Service Circular 7/2003
The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
2004/05 Fire and Rescue National Framework

15. GOVERNANCE OF REGIONAL FIRE CONTROL CENTRES CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' approval for the Authority's response to consultation on governance arrangements for Fire and Rescue Service Regional Control Centres.
-

Background

2. The Authority is updated regularly on National and local progress on the Regional Control Centre (RCC) project.
3. A response is now required from the Authority on the Government's consultation on their proposed governance arrangements for RCCs as set out in Fire Service Circular 13-2006.
4. This circular describes the Government's views on the ways in which it would expect Local Authority companies to operate in delivering and running Regional Fire and Rescue Control Centres. It sets out options and specific questions on which it seeks the views of Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards.
5. A draft proposed response is attached for Members' consideration.
6. Members should note that the Fire and Rescue National Framework 06/08 states that all Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure local authority companies are established by specified dates – the first wave are to be in place by 01 August 2006, whilst the West Midlands RCC must be established by 01 January 2007.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the attached draft response be approved.

Background Papers

Fire Service Circular 13-2006
2006/08 Fire and Rescue National Framework

Governance Arrangements - Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Service

Response to Consultation

Q.1 Do the Government's arrangements described above offer the most effective way of:

- (i) Delivering a resilient National Control Centre network and the effective management of national resilience assets; while at the same time**
- (ii) maintaining FRA accountability and an appropriate level of flexibility for elected members ensuring that the service meets the needs of local people?**

A It is difficult to assess and conclude whether the Government's proposed arrangements offer the most effective way of delivering a resilient National Control Centre and effective management of National resilience assets due to insufficient information being made available at this critical time in the project.

The consultation paper does not provide any details regarding either the financial position of the centres, their practical day to day operations or long term strategic development. Furthermore the final National function proposals, which will also have a substantial impact on the most effective governance model required, are yet to be determined. It must be noted, therefore that in our view our contribution to this consultation is not based on the level of robust information that we would wish to have available to us.

In terms of assessing whether the arrangements maintain accountability and an appropriate level of flexibility, it is again difficult to comment without having had the opportunity to review a fully detailed business case. However, it is clear that any structure must be as streamlined as possible. It must ensure any inherent conflicts of interest are avoided, facilitate swift decision making and implementation of decisions, and deliver clear lines of accountability.

The finally determined level of National functions will have a direct impact on flexibility available at a local level i.e. the more functions set at a national level the less flexibility will be available at a local level.

Q.2 Should the Local Authority companies be restricted in the scope of their activities as described above or should they be given the

freedom to diversify?

- A** The Local Authority companies should have the ability to diversify their activities if necessary, although to do so in the initial start up or subsequent build up phase could be problematic as the company should first focus on delivering their existing services efficiently and effectively. Any diversification should only happen once the existing services are stable and are being delivered successfully over a continued period of time. If the companies wish to diversify they should be limited to carrying out related services.

Care is needed to ensure that any diversification activities do not trigger the companies being subject to EU procurement regulations and guidance from Central Government should be provided on this issue prior to finalising governance arrangements.

Q.3 Should Authorities be given complete freedom in the composition and selection of board members and naming of the company?

- A** The Local Authority companies should have the discretion to appoint such directors as they see fit but guidelines should be provided to ensure best performance and impartiality. The ability to vary the members of a Board and/or seek additional views from time to time is paramount and therefore the companies should have the right to co-opt members on to the board at any time if necessary.

There is also a need for the board to be a representative of its area and indeed its Members. This should be taken into account in establishing any Board provided it does not create any undue conflicts of interest or lack of impartiality.

In terms of the name for the companies it must be the case that the names across the country should be uniform so that they are readily identifiable and understood by not only the fire and rescue profession, their partners and local and national government but also the public.

Q.4 Should there be a relationship between RCC companies and RMB's and if so what form should it take?

- A** The Local Authority companies should maintain their independence from the Regional Management Boards but must be able to work with them in some situations so as to achieve the objectives of the companies, seeking advice

and assistance on issues when appropriate. However, care must be exercised to avoid any conflicts of interests arising between the Regional Management Boards and the companies or the companies losing their independence.

Q.5 Should RCC companies be subject to the same provisions on conduct and maladministration as local authorities and other relevant bodies and the rules relating to the Local Authority indemnity?

A LACCs should be subject to the same provisions on conduct and maladministration as Local Authorities. Each company should have its own Code of Conduct. Directors and Members should also be indemnified under the rules relating to local authorities.

Q.6 Are you content with the draft memorandum and articles of association? Please comment freely on both using the table below.

A General - the relationship between FRA Members and those "other members" needs further clarification. As drafted the FRA Members (who have the right to appoint 2 directors) could be out-voted on the Board. Consideration should be given to ensuring a clear division of responsibilities, with weighted voting and veto rights for the FRA members.

Q.7 Do FRA's have views about the best way to manage the relationship between the RMB and the company and the running of the project?

A The Fire and Rescue Authorities and the Regional Management Boards must be able to work together in order to progress and complete the project. However, the Authorities must be independent of the Boards in dealing with the project, in particular during the consultation and initial set up phases.

16. Ethical Framework

Purpose of report

1. To inform members of the publication of the Ethical Framework.
-

Background

2. In adopting the National Fire Service Values, the Authority has an opportunity to install these values within a wider framework, incorporating a code of practice for staff, as well as a more generic approach based on ethical practices.
3. The Ethical Framework is the foundation for values and behaviours within the Service as we examine organisational culture, and it incorporates current good practice in the area of equality and diversity.

The Ethical Framework

4. The framework has four key principal themes which it establishes for the Authority:
 - A culture of rights and responsibilities. The development of organisational culture is a key priority in the Modernisation Agenda, and this Framework outlines a culture based on individual rights and responsibilities, coupled with organisational commitment.
 - The values of a modernised Fire Service, as defined Nationally, and adopted locally.
 - An understanding of equality and diversity. This forms a cornerstone of our ongoing equality and diversity programme.
 - An employees Code of Conduct, based on good practice guidelines as set out by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Ethical Framework be adopted.

Background papers

None

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK
AND
CODE OF CONDUCT

DRAFT

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK: YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction

As a member of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, you have certain rights, which we value and would always seek to support. But being a member of a public authority means we have certain responsibilities, which are reflected, at a strategic and operational level. Every individual has a role to play, and this document will help to define that.

The purpose of this document is to provide Fire Service personnel with an aid to addressing issues regarding equality and diversity in the workplace by recognising the values of the service and promoting a positive code of conduct, and to ensure that everyone's rights and responsibilities are supported and most importantly exercised.

Our Values

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is committed to the values of the Fire Service. These values are a way of recognizing the standard at which we operate, the ethos behind the service, and can act as a template for every employee in every situation.

We recognize that shared values increase commitment and ultimately effectiveness in an environment of changing expectations, both within the Fire Service nationally and locally, and its stakeholders, our staff and the communities we serve.

We value innovation and recognize the value of training and learning. We encourage critical and lateral thinking to ensure we are continuously improving our performance.

We value and are committed to the personal development of all our people. We work towards the inclusion of all people, encourage all contributions, respect and value difference and promote ethical standards of behaviour and the promotion of well-being.

We value diverse communities. We are committed to the effective delivery of our services to all members of our communities. We recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions.

We are proud of our service and are passionate about protecting our reputation. We aim to provide the right service at the right time in the right place, through our focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and appropriate levels of accountabilities.

This is not an exhaustive list of our values, but is the spirit in which all personnel pursue our organisational aims and objectives, to ensure that the service we provide is effective, equitable and positively supports each other and the communities we serve.

We are committed to equality of opportunity for everyone. We recognise and value diversity and work towards the elimination of unfair discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. We recognise that discrimination may exist on a variety of other grounds and would always seek to reflect

the spirit as well as the letter of equality’s legislation in all our policies, practices and procedures.

We are committed to social inclusion and recognise that some communities face higher levels of disadvantage and risk. We will support local, regional and national bodies to achieve community cohesion, reduce risk and exclusion, and work towards making Herefordshire and Worcestershire a safer place to live and work.

Our Commitment, Our Values, Our Future

<p><u>We Value Innovation, Change and Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage critical and lateral thinking and manage constructive challenge; • We take responsibility for improving our performance; • We develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential; • We take responsibility for our actions; • We encourage problem solving at all levels; • We capture good ideas from wherever they originate; and • We learn from our experiences. 	<p><u>We Value our People</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to developing our people; • We build relationships that are based upon mutual trust and respect; • We work in an inclusive way; • We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make; • We respect and see difference as a strength; • We behave in an ethical way; • We promote well-being of others; • We allow empathy to flourish; • We are active and participative listeners; • We communicate with honesty and integrity; and • We say ‘thank-you’.
<p><u>We Value Diverse Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to serving all parts of our communities; • We recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions; • We always fulfil our responsibilities to people, communities and the environment; • We remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve; • We will challenge inappropriate behaviour; and • We actively seek feedback. 	<p><u>We Value our Fire and Rescue Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are passionate about maintaining/improving our great reputation; • We make work rewarding and motivating; • We all pull together in the right direction; • We are a team and not a family; • We enjoy and celebrate our work; • We focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities; and • We provide the right service at the right time and in the right place.

EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE WHILST UPHOLDING THESE VALUES AND ENSURING THE ORGANISATION MEETS THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE WITH THESE CORE VALUES IN MIND. Our commitment, values and future are a philosophy that states we will always operate fairly and ensuring dignity and respect in the workplace and in the communities we serve, in an environment which values individual contributions and work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

What is equality and diversity?

In an organisation where the core values are professionalism, dedication and responsiveness, the underlying themes of equality and diversity are essential in achieving success. By the nature of the job that we do, it is essential that our workforce reflect the community we serve and that we treat each other with respect and dignity as well as the wider community.

Equality – the framework for equality is legislative. It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor that cannot be justified. We aim to create an environment where no-one is unfairly treated based on their need. We will work positively towards the elimination of unfair discrimination.

Equality is about removing bias, prejudice and stereotyping, so that the only form of acceptable discrimination is on the basis of ability.

Diversity is about creating an environment in which every individual can expect to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion or creed, political beliefs, trade union activity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, stature or any other factor which cannot be justified.

The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workplace consists of a diverse population of people. This diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences, which will include factors such as those previously listed. It is our profound belief that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where talents are being fully utilized and in which organizational goals are met.

Why is equality and diversity important?

As a theme, equality and diversity has gathered considerable momentum over the past few years. In many areas we have seen the introduction of new legislation, the more detailed definition of different types of discrimination, and the raising of the profile of anti-harassment and anti-bullying strategies across the entire public sector. Clearly, the impact of this area has been profound, but its underlying ethos can be lost sometimes.

A holistic examination of equality and diversity reveals 3 main arguments for ensuring any framework we choose to use is effective and appropriate. These points are:-

The Moral Case – every manager, firefighter, member of staff and members of the community have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. It is morally unacceptable to unfairly discriminate. We therefore all have a moral duty to carry out the responsibilities outlined in our equal opportunities policy.

The Legal Case – a number of Acts of Parliament prevent us from discriminating against a person because of their age, sex, race, religious belief, sexual orientation and disability. Harassment is also unlawful. The Law allows people to seek remedies through Employment Tribunals and Court, which can be extremely damaging and costly to the Organisation.

The Business Case – a working policy incorporating equality and diversity should result in a service whose personnel represent all sections of the community, who can expect to be treated with respect and dignity and who can expect to be selected for promotion, training and development purely on ability and merit. It is proven that an organization that respects and nurtures the diverse range of skills and abilities of its workforce will be a successful one – it makes good business sense!

Our Commitment

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary, operational, staff or support staff will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilized to maximize the efficiency of the organisation.

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying, harassment or victimisation will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- Breaches of our equality policies and practices will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Your Rights

This is what you can expect from The Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

- No employee or job applicant will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability, marital status, religion or sexual orientation. We will always operate in a meritocratic environment.
- You have the right to full access to the equal opportunities policy, the service mission statement and performance plan which highlight our commitment to equality and diversity.

- You have the right to work in an environment which is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- You have the right to be part of a workforce which is free from hostility, aggression and intimidation.
- You have the right to be selected for employment, training and development on the basis of your merit, abilities and capabilities.
- You have the right to have access to our intermediary and listening ear schemes which can support the resolution of any issues of concern you may have.
- You have the right to contact or become involved with the Fairness at Work Advisory Group to support the development of Equality and Diversity in the organisation.

Your Responsibilities

- To cooperate with all measures regarding equal opportunities by becoming familiar with the equal opportunities policy and related documentation and being committed to implementing it in the workplace.
- To treat all employees fairly and reasonably and not allow your own conduct to cause offence or misunderstanding.
- To treat colleagues with respect and dignity and value the diversity of people working for the Authority and the contribution they bring.
- To welcome new arrivals into the workplace
- Be proactive, be aware, be receptive, be prepared
- Not to unlawfully or unfairly discriminate
- Not to induce or pressurize others to do the above
- Not to harass, abuse or intimidate others.
- To draw to the attention of Senior Officers any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- To be aware of the organisation's values and to ensure you work within its confines.
- Become aware of the type of behaviour which supports the philosophy and values of the service, and that which would give offence to fellow employees and make your disapproval of such behaviour known.
- Speak out if you see harassment or bullying in your workplace and support colleagues who have suffered unfair or offensive behaviour.

THE EMPLOYEES' CODE OF CONDUCT

Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality and Objectivity

1. An employee must perform his duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

Accountability

2. An employee must be accountable to the authority for his actions.

Respect for Others

3. An employee must –
 - a) treat others with respect;
 - b) not discriminate unlawfully against any person; and
 - c) treat members and co-opted members of the authority professionally.

Stewardship

4. An employee must –
 - a) use any public funds entrusted to or handled by him in a responsible and lawful manner; and
 - b) not make personal use of property or facilities of the authority unless properly authorised to do so.

Personal Interests

5. An employee must not in his official or personal capacity –
 - a) allow his personal interests to conflict with the authority's requirements; or
 - b) use his position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Registration of Interests

6. An employee must comply with any requirements of the authority –
 - a) to register or declare interests; and
 - b) to declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of his employment.

Reporting procedures

7. An employee must not treat another employee of the authority less favourably than other employees by reason that that other employee has done, intends to do, or is suspected of doing anything under or by reference to any procedure the authority has for reporting misconduct.

Openness

8. An employee must –
 - a) not disclose information given to him in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which he believes is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless he is required by law to do so; and
 - b) not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

Appointment of staff

9. (1) An employee must not be involved in the appointment of any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, who is a relative or friend.

(2) In this paragraph –

a) “relative” means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, stepdaughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons; and

b) “partner” in sub-paragraph (a) above means a member of a couple who live together.

Duty of trust

10. An employee must at all times act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in him.

DRAFT

Glossary

Some Terms and Definitions

Bullying - is any persistent behaviour, directed against an individual, which is intimidating, offensive or malicious and which undermines the confidence and self esteem of the recipient. Bullying is largely identified not so much by what has actually been done but rather by the effect that it has on its target. Legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying. An occasional raised voice or argument is not bullying.

Direct Discrimination – treating someone less favourably than someone else in comparable circumstances because of their sex, race, age or any other factor which cannot be justified.

Disability - A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be:

- substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
- adverse, and
- long-term (that is, it has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

Disability Discrimination - occurs when the reason for the discrimination relates to the person's disability. Often, this can occur when a general policy or practice used in a Fire Service ends up having a discriminatory effect upon a disabled job applicant, employee or ex-employee.

In determining whether disability-related discrimination has occurred, the Fire Service's treatment of the disabled person must be compared with that of a person to whom the disability-related reason does not apply.

Discrimination – is to treat a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their skin colour, religion, sex, etc:

Diversity - is about creating an environment in which every individual can expect to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion or creed, political beliefs, trade union activity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, stature or any other factor which cannot be justified.

Equality - is about the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment. It is not however simply a matter of "treating everybody the same", and is backed up by specific legislation. In order that we live in a fairer society. Essentially, equality is about giving everyone a fair chance to fulfil their potential.

Harassment – can be described as unwanted and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, materials, suggestions or physical contact which a person finds objectionable, intimidating, upsetting, embarrassing, humiliating or offensive and which a reasonable person would find unacceptable. It could be targeted at the recipient's race, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, colour, nationality, ethnicity or marital status. It is essential to remember that it is not the intentions of the perpetrator that is key in deciding whether harassment has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by normal standards and is disadvantageous to the victim.

Indirect Discrimination – occurs when a provision, criterion, policy or practice applies to everyone but has the effect of unjustifiably disadvantaging a certain group.

Institutionalised Racism - MacPherson defines institutionalised racism as: The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

Intimidation - can occur when someone, with a view to compelling any person to abstain from doing an act which they have a legal right to do:

- uses violence to or intimidates such other person, their spouse or children, or damages their property.
- persistently follows such other persons from place to place.
- hides any tools, clothes or other property owned or used by such other person, or deprives them of or hinders them in the use thereof.
- watches or besets the house or other place where such person resides, or works, or carries on business, or happens to be, or the approach to such house or place.
- follows such other person with two or more other people in a disorderly manner along any street or road.

Prejudice – is an unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge.

Reasonable Adjustments - The duty to make reasonable adjustments arises where a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of the Fire Service, or any physical feature of premises occupied by the Fire Service, places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled.

The Fire Service has to take such steps as is reasonable for it to have to take in all the circumstances to remove or minimise the disadvantage – i.e. make a 'reasonable adjustment'.

Victimisation – is unfair treatment of an employee who has

- brought proceedings under any of the Authority’s policies or under their individual rights in law.
- given evidence or information in connection with such proceedings.
- made allegations of a contravention of the Authority’s policies.
- asserted their legal right in any action.

Where can you get help?

Contact the listening ear – *[latest details to be added prior to publication]*

Contact Intermediaries – *[latest details to be added prior to publication]*

Other useful contacts:

Commission for Racial Equality
Tackling racial discrimination and promoting racial equality
Tel 020 7939 0000
www.cre.gov.uk

Disability Rights Commission
Providing information and advice to disabled people and employers about their rights and duties.
Tel 08457 622 633
www.drc.org.uk

Equal Opportunities Commission
Working to eliminate sex discrimination
Tel 08456 015 901
www.eoc.org.uk

References/ further reading
Equal Opportunities Policy BPI No.1 Section D Part 9.1
Race Equality Scheme

17. THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Purpose of Report

1. To note the updated Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for 2006/08.
-

Background

2. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued an updated Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for 2006/08. This sets out the strategy for meeting the Government's targets for the Fire and Rescue Service and these must be taken into account in agreeing the Corporate Plan.
3. A report detailing the main issues contained within the Framework and nominating a Lead Officer for each of the items is attached for information.
4. Lead Officers are developing action plans setting out the Service's planned response for 2006/08. Progress will be reported to future meetings.
5. The Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee is to consider this update on 8 June 2006 and any comments will be reported at the meeting.

Background Papers

None

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Must do’s’

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
1. Fire Prevention and Risk Management			
1.4 – page 8	<p>In summary, Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>must</u> each have in place and maintain an IRMP which reflects local need and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. They <u>should</u> also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce annual action plans on which they have fully consulted their local communities, allowing twelve weeks for the consultation; • have regard to central government guidance in producing their plans; and • make efficient and effective use of resources to implement the IRMP and the action plan, including using more efficient working practices where appropriate. 		DCFO
1.37 – page 14	<p>Authorities <u>must</u> therefore have a fire safety inspection programme and this must form part of the IRMP, as set out in IRMP Guidance Note 4, which gives advice on risk-based enforcement.</p>		ACO CS
2. Working Together – the Regional Approach			
2.4 – page 18	<p>2.4 It is important that Regional Management Boards now deliver improvement in the Fire and Rescue Service. They <u>must</u> have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear aims and objectives; and • delegated powers that are appropriate to those aims and objectives. 		DCFO
2.7 – page 19	<p>2.8 They <u>must</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish regional control centres as an 		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Must do’s’

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
	operational priority (see below); and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce regional procurement within the context of the national procurement strategy (see below). 		
2.13 – page 19	Fire and Rescue Authorities, through the Regional Management Boards, <u>must</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the Government to ensure that the phased transition from existing control rooms to the new control centres is integrated with the roll-out of Firelink and delivered by the end of 2009; • ensure that the local authority companies who will run the control centres on behalf of Fire and Rescue Authorities are established in spring 2006; • ensure that the new control centres comply with national guidance to be issued on staff roles, training and mobilising procedures (including fallback and recovery) and resilience; • ensure that they observe national guidance on operating and mobilising procedures and associated systems; • ensure that they establish the necessary interfaces with the national network; and • ensure that the control centres observe convergence and resilience requirements to be issued and that the staff maintain data for which they are responsible according to standards that will be defined. 		DCFO
2.21 – page 24	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>must</u> support the arrangements set out in the Strategy and procure through FiReBuy Ltd where directed.		ACO SS

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Must do’s’

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
3. Effective Response			
3.19 – page 26	To ensure a consistent operational approach the Service <u>must</u> (change from should) adopt the principles and procedures detailed in the <i>Fire Service Manual Vol. 2: Fire Service Operations – Incident Command</i> ⁶ . This will help to ensure the adoption nationwide of common arrangements and the safe and effective management of operations.		ACO CS
4. Resilience			
4.9 – page 31	As a consequence of this Act, Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards where appropriate, <u>must</u> work in co-operation with other emergency services, local authorities and front line responders at the local level to: assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform emergency planning and business continuity planning; • put in place emergency plans, supported by appropriate training, exercising, validation and revision processes; • put in place business continuity plans, so that the authority can continue to function in an emergency; • put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency; • share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination; and, • co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Must do’s’

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
5. Fire and Rescue Staff			
5.5 – page 36	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>must</u> ensure that all members of staff are treated fairly and afforded equality of opportunity. Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that all staff are developed in a way which takes account of the differing needs of the individual, in order to deliver the Authority’s aims and objectives effectively.		ACO HR
5.21 – page 40	In recruiting staff Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>must</u> ensure they comply with the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 Section 36(1)(a-h), by carrying out Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure checks on those who will be working with children and vulnerable adults.		ACO HR
6. Workforce Development			
7. Finance			
7.27 – page 56	Although this arrangement means that trading <u>must</u> be conducted through a company structure, with associated costs, authorities must price their services at market rates in the interests of fair competition.		Dir Finance
8. Performance Management			
8.1 – page 58	People must have assurance that public services are delivered efficiently and effectively.		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Must do’s’

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
9. Research			

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
1. Fire Prevention and Risk Management			
1.3 – page 8	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> ensure that their IRMPs are both accessible – to the public, business and other stakeholders – and easy to understand.		DCFO
1.4 – page 8	In summary, Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>must</u> each have in place and maintain an IRMP which reflects local need and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. They <u>should</u> also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce annual action plans on which they have fully consulted their local communities, allowing twelve weeks for the consultation; • have regard to central government guidance in producing their plans; and • make efficient and effective use of resources to implement the IRMP and the action plan, including using more efficient working practices where appropriate. 		DCFO
1.14 – page10	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> consider community fire safety, including the priority vulnerable groups in their area, in preparing their IRMPs and in deciding the balance of funding and resources.		DCFO
1.22 – page 12	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> have regard to the strategy in all work with children and young people which they undertake.		DCFO
1.24 – page12	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> consider arson reduction and their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership strategies in preparing their IRMPs and deciding the balance of funding and resources. (contd)		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
1.27 – page 12	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> work with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and other partnerships with external agencies where they will add value in tackling arson.		
1.37 – page 14	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> – in drawing up their enforcement programmes – prioritise inspection of places that, in the case of fire, pose a significant risk to life.		ACO CS
1.40 – page 15	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> be aware of the contribution Crown Inspectors can make in achieving the aims and objectives of their IRMPs, consult Crown Inspectors on their IRMPs, and work closely with them where appropriate.		ACO CS

2. Working Together : The Regional Approach			
2.5 – page 18	Regional Management Boards <u>should</u> be able to demonstrate continuing and measurable progress towards meeting the requirements in each of the key areas listed at paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of this document; and that they have the capacity – in terms of both resources and expertise – to deliver in those key areas. Fire and Rescue Authorities should report in their Annual Efficiency Statements (see chapter 7) on the extent to which they are making efficiency savings through regional collaboration.		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
2.7 – page 18	<p>They <u>should</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate common and specialist services, e.g. fire investigation (see Chapter 3); • put in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies (see Chapter 4); • introduce regional personnel and human resource functions (see Chapter 5); • develop a regional approach to training (see Chapter 6). 		ACO CS
2. Effective Response			
3.3 – page 24	<p>Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> ensure an effective and efficient response is available to meet the range of incidents which they may reasonably expect to encounter, working together as appropriate. This includes ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff are trained to professional standards, and are familiar with risks; • effective command and control systems are in place, fitting in with the programme to deliver RCCs; <p>arrangements are in place for critical risk information to be readily available at the scene of the incident. (ODPM recognise the value of critical incident data and are developing systems to achieve this and part of the FiReControl project.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all staff are developed to be competent in their role. • staff are familiar with the principal risks likely to be met in the particular work areas. <p>The right equipment is available</p>		ACO CS

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 'Should do's

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
3.10 – page 25	<p>Fire and Rescue Authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have regard to ODFM's 'Guide to Reducing the Number of False Alarms from Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems'; • consider the adoption of the CFOA 'Model Agreement for Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems' published in 2004 following wide consultation with stakeholders; • working with other Fire and Rescue Authorities and other emergency services where appropriate, take steps to drive down the number of hoax calls and unwanted signals from automatic fire alarms; and • log the callers and properties that create the greatest demand, assess the risks associated with them, and decide upon action to achieve improvement, which may include increased fire prevention work or a changed level of response. 		ACO CS
3.12 – page 25	<p>Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> actively review the opportunities for improving community safety by implementing co-responder schemes in partnership with other agencies.</p>		ACO CS
3.15 – page 26	<p>Authorities <u>should</u>, therefore, design their IRMPs to ensure that, so far as practical, there is efficient and effective shared use of resources, particularly, for example: the services of principal, senior and specialist officers; pumping and non-pumping appliances, such as those used for aerial access; equipment used in traffic accident response and the bulk supply of water;</p>		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
	and specialist support services such as rope rescue teams.		
3.25 – page 27	Using the model protocol and the supporting NOSs, Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> , through Regional Management Boards, ensure specialist fire investigation capacity is pooled to provide an effective and efficient regional capability.		ACO CS

4. Resilience

5. Fire and Rescue Staff

5.7 – page 36	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> ensure that there is as much opportunity as is reasonably possible for people to work flexibly, for example on a part-time basis, using flexi-time or working as part of a job share partnership.		ACO HR
5.10 – page 38	5.8 Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> ensure that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make full and efficient use of staff on the retained duty system in line with the needs in their IRMPs; • give staff on the retained duty system access to development opportunities comparable to those for wholetime duty system and other staff; and • break down artificial barriers between staff on the retained duty system and other staff, including where appropriate exploring options such as mixed crewing and providing wholetime 		ACO HR

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
	duty system staff with the opportunity to undertake additional service on the retained duty system.		
5.13 – page 38	<p>Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, <u>should</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draw up a regional HR strategy by Autumn 2006, encompassing recruitment, learning and development (see Chapter 6), occupational health, health and safety, medical advice services, sickness/ill health management, discipline, mobility and a regional equalities strategy; and • identify and implement the most efficient and effective means for the region to deliver these services, including through lead authorities or outsourcing where appropriate. <p>ensure regional HR strategies are compatible with local IRMPs. (It is for each Regional Management Board to decide which issues, in addition to those set out above, are best dealt with in the regional strategy and those which fall within IRMPs and are best dealt with locally, and to ensure that there is a good fit.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that they undertake appropriate Equality Impact Assessment of all their policies, plans, procedures or practices in accordance with legislative requirements. (section added) 		ACO HR
5.19 – page 40	Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, <u>should</u> produce an equalities strategy (see paragraph 5.12).		ACO HR

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
5.30 – page 41	Fire and Rescue Authorities should take effective steps to improve sickness management and reduce ill health retirements.		ACO HR
5.37 – page 42	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that their occupational health arrangements including the provision of occupational health advice are efficient and effective, • ensure that full consideration is given to the health and fitness of all staff and that they are assigned to appropriate roles; • introduce and administer effective absence management processes and procedures to facilitate the achievement of Government targets on the reduction of sickness absence and ill health retirements, and • consider the cost and organisational benefits of operating their occupational health arrangements on a regional basis; 		ACO HR
6. Workforce Development			
6.7 – page 44	In adopting and implementing IPDS, Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the development of its staff underpins and supports the delivery of its IRMP¹⁹; • put in place systems and train managers to 		ACO HR

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
	<p>ensure that staff are assessed fairly against national standards, with overall performance regularly reviewed, and workplace assessments carried out and recorded consistently;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider how collaborative working may maximise the benefit from available resources for IPDS; • support the use of any pay flexibilities currently available with robust evidence, for example on recruitment and retention needs and through job evaluation exercises; and • communicate all changes to staff effectively. <p>from September 2007, use national processes for the progression of operational and control staff</p>		
6.11 – page 46	<p>Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards <u>should</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek to ensure that learning and development is carried out in ways that reflect the principles set out in the LDS; • support and monitor the delivery of learning and development in accordance with the key elements of the LDS; • ensure that learning and development forms part of regional HR strategies (see Chapter 5); and <p>from September 2007, use national processes for the recruitment of firefighters and the progression of operational and control staff</p>		ACO HR

--

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
7. Finance			
7.1 – page 50	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> develop fully the opportunities for efficiency improvements, including through collaboration, consistent with their duties under Best Value and the Government’s objectives to reduce accidental deaths from fire in the home and deliberate fires.		DOF
7.3 – page 50	All English Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> report their efficiency gains through Annual Efficiency Statements (AES) as described in Fire Service Circular 48/2005.		DOF
7.4 – page 51	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> consider actively for themselves whether any of the approaches identified in the guidance will assist them in delivering greater efficiencies.		DOF
7.26 – page 55	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> consider very carefully whether the costs of providing the non-statutory services specified in the Order should fall on those who requested the service or on council tax payers.		DOF
8. Performance Management			
9. Research			
9.9 – page 67	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> : • draw on the relevant research in exercising their functions, for example in formulating their		DCFO

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework ‘Should do’s

Item & Page No	Requirement for Authority	Proposed Action	Responsible Officer
	Integrated Risk Management Plans, including strategies to efficiently and effectively prevent fires, mitigate their effects on people and buildings and deal effectively with incidents when they occur; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid duplication by drawing on others’ work and sharing their own findings and plans, including through the Practitioners’ Forum and the Academy 		
9.13 – page 68	Fire and Rescue Authorities <u>should</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue the timely completion of statistical returns issued by ODPM; • assist ODPM in establishing a fully electronic data collection system by contributing their knowledge of fire and rescue service procedures and incident recording to the e-data collection project; • explore how they might provide timely information on fires and incidents of special interest (FOSIs), in particular, details of fire related fatalities. 		DCFO

18. REVIEW OF CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Purpose of Report

1. To consider updates to the Code of Corporate Governance.
-

Background

2. Members and Senior Officers of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.
3. These arrangements are set out in the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance, first formally adopted by the Authority in March 2003 and last reported in December 2004. This Code describes the system by which the Authority directs and controls its functions and relates to its communities. It closely follows guidance published jointly by CIPFA/SOLACE and endorsed by the local Government Association and the Audit Commission.
4. The Code is subject to ongoing review to ensure that the highest standards of governance are maintained. A number of minor updates have been made as highlighted in the copy of the revised Code of Corporate Governance which is attached.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority recommend that the updates to the Code of Corporate Governance be noted and endorsed.

Background Papers

None

Code of Corporate Governance

Contents:

	Page
1. Statement of Assurance – Corporate Governance	2
2. Code of Corporate Governance	3
3. Dimension 1: Community Focus	4
4. Dimension 2: Service Delivery Arrangements	8
5. Dimension 3: Structures and Processes	11
6. Dimension 4: Risk Management and Internal Control	15
7. Dimension 5: Standards of Conduct	17

Code of Corporate Governance

1. Statement of Assurance – Corporate Governance

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, Members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

To this end, the Authority has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of and reflects the requirements of CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) framework "Corporate Governance in Local Government: a Keystone for Community Governance". A copy of the Authority's Code is available on the Service's website (www.hwfire.org.uk) or can be obtained on request from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1JR.

During the year 2005-06, the Authority has reviewed and consolidated appropriate management and reporting arrangements to enable it to satisfy itself that its approach to Corporate Governance is both adequate and effective in practice. Specifically it has given the Clerk to the Authority the responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Code, reviewing its operation in practice and reporting annually to the Authority on compliance with the Code and any changes that may be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness.

In addition, the Authority's Treasurer (through his internal audit service) has been given the responsibility to review independently and report to the Authority annually, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Code and the extent of compliance with it. On the basis of the reports of the Clerk and the Treasurer arising from their reviews of the Authority's Corporate Governance arrangements, we are satisfied that these are adequate and operating effectively.

The Authority is seeking to continually improve the effectiveness of its arrangements for the governance of the Authority's affairs. We will review continued compliance with the Code as part of our next annual review.

[Signed:]

Cllr G Davis
Chair

P Hayden
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Date:

2. Code of Corporate Governance

The Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority's Code of Corporate Governance closely follows guidance published jointly by CIPFA/SOLACE and endorsed by the Local Government Association and the Audit Commission. It has been developed in response to the recommendation that Local Authorities draw up their own 'Code of Corporate Governance', a document that describes the system by which an Authority directs and controls its functions and relates to its communities.

Three key principles underpin Corporate Governance:

Openness and Inclusivity

Openness is required to ensure that stakeholders can have confidence in the decision-making and management processes of Local Authorities and in the approach of the individuals within them. Openness also requires an inclusive approach, which seeks to ensure that all stakeholders and potential stakeholders have the opportunity to engage effectively with the decision-making processes and actions of Local Authorities.

Integrity

Integrity comprises both straightforward dealing and completeness. It is based upon honesty, selflessness, objectivity and high standards of propriety and probity in the stewardship of public funds and management of an Authority's affairs. It is dependent on the effectiveness of the control framework and on the personal standards and professionalism of the Members and staff within the Authority.

Accountability

Accountability is the process whereby Local Authorities and the Members and staff within them are responsible for their decisions and actions, including their stewardship of public funds and all aspects of performance and submit themselves to appropriate external scrutiny.

The CIPFA/SOLACE guidance identifies five dimensions, which should be covered in a Code:

1. Community Focus
2. Service Delivery Arrangements
3. Structures and Processes
4. Risk Management and Internal Control
5. Standards of Conduct

This Code takes each of these dimensions in turn and sets out the ways in which the principles of Corporate Governance should be reflected in each. It then identifies the measures, which are already in place within the Authority to comply with the requirements set out in the guidance.

The statement of assurance which fronts this document is incorporated within the Authority's Performance Plan.

3. Dimension 1: Community Focus

Through carrying out their general and specific duties and responsibilities and their ability to exert wider influence, Local Authorities should:

- work for and with their communities
- exercise leadership in their local communities, where appropriate
- undertake an “ambassadorial” role to promote the well-being of their area, where appropriate, through maintaining effective arrangements for explicit accountability to stakeholders for the Authority’s performance and its effectiveness in the delivery of services and the sustainable use of resources
- demonstrate integrity in the Authority’s dealings in building effective relationships and partnerships with other public agencies and the private/voluntary sectors
- demonstrate openness in all their dealings
- demonstrate inclusivity by communicating and engaging with all sections of the community to encourage active participation
- develop and articulate a clear and up-to-date vision and corporate strategy in response to community needs.

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>a) Publish on a timely basis an Annual Report presenting an objective, understandable report of the Authority's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> activities and achievements; and <input type="checkbox"/> financial position and performance. <p>The report should include statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> explaining the Authority's responsibility for the financial statements; <input type="checkbox"/> confirming that the Authority complies with relevant standards and codes of Corporate Governance; and <input type="checkbox"/> on the effectiveness of the Authority's system for risk management and internal control. 	<p>Annual Service publications which support compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Plan (full and summarised versions for public distribution) <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Accounts <p>These are all ratified by the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) and made widely available to the public, including access through our website.</p> <p>Our Performance Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a statement of compliance with standards and Code of Corporate Governance <input type="checkbox"/> a statement on the effectiveness of risk management/internal control systems

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>b) Publish on a timely basis a Performance Plan presenting an objective, balanced and understandable account and assessment of the Authority's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> current performance in service delivery; and <input type="checkbox"/> plans to maintain and improve service quality. 	<p>The Performance Plan is published annually (along with Performance Plan summary), ratified in public by the FRA and made widely available including access through our website.</p> <p>Our Integrated Risk Management Plan published (February 2006) and reviewed annually.</p> <p>Community Safety Strategy published Summer 2005.</p>
<p>c) Put in place proper arrangements for the independent review of the financial and operational reporting processes.</p>	<p>Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is subject to scrutiny by internal and external audit who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Audit the accounts <input type="checkbox"/> Review the Code of Corporate Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Review aspects of performance management <p>The Service is subject to a newly developed Comprehensive Performance Assessment system which includes a self-assessment process and development of an improvement plan, followed by an external audit and inspection.</p> <p>Following a Good rating in CPA. Preparatory external assessment May 2006 onwards.</p> <p>Best Value reviews have been undertaken of key functions. This programme followed a five year plan published in accordance with Audit Commission guidance. A further timetable of reviews will be developed to respond to the outcomes of the CPA process.</p> <p>Performance indicators, Best Value Reviews and financial monitoring returns are all regularly scrutinised through our Committee structure which has been reviewed and strengthened. Performance scrutiny arrangements under constant review including changes to Committee structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Audit Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Standards Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Fire and Rescue Authority

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>d) Put in place proper arrangements designed to encourage individuals and groups from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Authority and put in place appropriate monitoring processes to ensure that they continue to work in practice.</p>	<p>Feedback from service users actively sought and reported to the Service by an external company, (Opinion Research Services).</p> <p>The website provides public access to information about the Service, and encourages responses through the provision of an email response facility.</p> <p>Comprehensive consultation undertaken to support IRMP Autumn 2005.</p> <p>Summary of our Performance Plan distributed to key stakeholders and available on the Website</p> <p>Compliments, complaints and concerns monitoring system in place, reported to the Management Team and FRA Public able to contact the Service electronically on the Website as well as by telephone or in writing.</p> <p>Community Events designed to engage with local people and promote key safety messages.</p> <p>Members visits to Service locations.</p>
<p>e) Make an explicit commitment to openness in all of their dealings, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so and by their actions and communications deliver an account against that commitment.</p>	<p>Our commitment to openness signalled in its Freedom of Information Act/ Environment Information Regulations publication scheme.</p> <p>Complaints, concerns and letters of appreciation reported quarterly to the Management Team and the FRA.</p> <p>Public have access to FRA and Committee meetings, with prior notice issued in public places and papers made available through distribution to the press and on the website.</p>

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>f) Establish clear channels of communication with all sections of their community and other stakeholders and put in place proper monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively.</p>	<p>Clear Service contact details, including support for disabled members of the community and translation facilities are published on key Service publications (for example, Performance Plan, IRMP).</p> <p>Members' contact details, including email facilities, are made widely available and they can be contacted to communicate issues for discussion or concern.</p> <p>The website, including a facility for e-mailing the Service, as well as registering compliments, concerns or complaints.</p> <p>The Service is actively involved with Community Liaison Groups, Crime And Disorder Groups, Social Services, and District Councils for example, Building Control.</p> <p>The Charter Mark process provides independent assurance that channels of communication are appropriate and effective. The Service had been successful for a third time in being granted this standard (November 2004). Surveillance visit successful in February 2006.</p> <p>999 arrangements are a clear channel of communication with regard to operational needs.</p> <p>The Service has a well-established mechanism for receiving and dealing with complaints and concerns and compliments (including electronic facilities), and for monitoring this process.</p> <p>Service restructure provides dedicated support for internal and external communications. A full review of communications is underway with a view to strengthening current arrangements (Autumn 2006).</p>
<p>g) Ensure that a vision for their local communities and their strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.</p>	<p>Robust and inclusive service planning and monitoring mechanisms are in place, focused on the Service's IRMP and Performance Plan.</p> <p>Individual Station Plans developed in consultation with District Station Commanders.</p> <p>Arson reduction strategy and other specific/local initiatives for targeted service delivery.</p> <p>The service has been a successful partner in Local Public Service Agreements with Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council, Local</p>

	<p>Association for Small Businesses and Worcestershire Business Partnership. Also see 1f above. LPSA 2 targets have been set with relevant partners.</p> <p>Now a member of Worcestershire Partnerships.</p>
--	--

4. Dimension 2: Service Delivery Arrangements

A Local Authority should ensure that continuous improvement is sought, agreed policies are implemented and decisions carried out by maintaining arrangements which:

- discharge their accountability for service delivery at a local level
- ensure effectiveness through setting targets and measuring performance
- demonstrate integrity in dealings with service users and developing partnerships to ensure the “right” provision of services locally
- demonstrate openness and inclusivity through consulting with key stakeholders, including service users
- are flexible so that they can be kept up-to-date and be adapted to accommodate change and meet user wishes.

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>a) Set standards and targets for performance in the delivery of services on a sustainable basis and with reference to equality policies.</p>	<p>Performance targets are set annually at a national (Framework Document and BVPIs) and local level (IRMP and Performance Plan).</p> <p>These are articulated in our Performance Plan and monitored through quarterly performance reports to the Management Team and Members of the Authority.</p> <p>Best Value family group meetings ensure appropriate benchmarking and best practice is identified.</p> <p>External audit of the Performance Plan ensures compliance with legislative and best practice standards.</p> <p>Particular targets are set with regard to equality and performance monitored as above.</p> <p>Equality issues dealt with by the Fairness at Work Advisory Group and its sub-groups.</p> <p>The Service has an Equal Opportunities Policy in place. An Equality and Diversity Project Officer is due to be appointed and an Equality Scheme has been published.</p> <p>An Equality and Diversity audit has been undertaken to monitor compliance and progress – the Service have been assessed as operating currently at level 3 – working towards level 4.</p>
CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>b) Put in place sound systems for providing management information for performance management purposes.</p>	<p>Performance management and information systems (including performance monitoring against BVPIs and local indicators) in place, validated by external audit. Timely management information available to officers and department heads via desktop PCs. Reports published on the Service’s intranet.</p> <p>The Management Team meets quarterly to scrutinise performance against plans and targets set.</p> <p>Regular reports to Best Value Committee and FRA on performance.</p>

<p>c) Monitor and report performance against agreed standards and targets and develop comprehensive and understandable performance plans.</p>	<p>The Performance Plan.</p> <p>Regular reports on performance against targets to Management and Members through the committee structure (see 1b above).</p>
<p>d) Put in place arrangements to allocate resources according to priorities.</p>	<p>Annual budget setting process, which sets priorities and establishes resource allocations according to the Performance Plan, including consultation with budget holders and the Management Team.</p> <p>The Management Team meets regularly to discuss performance against targets, and reallocate resources where possible in response to identified needs.</p> <p>The above process is scrutinised by the committee structure – in particular the Audit Committee and the Budget Committee and FRA.</p>
<p>CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements</p>	<p>HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements</p>
<p>e) Foster effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors and consider outsourcing where it is efficient and effective to do so in delivering services to meet the needs of the local community and put in place processes to ensure that they operate effectively in practice.</p>	<p>A number of examples of partnerships with other agencies (for example, education liaison, operational links with other emergency services, Mutual Aid agreement in place).</p> <p>Partnership SPI.</p> <p>Outsourcing considered within “challenge” element of Service Best Value Reviews.</p>
<p>f) Respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors and put in place arrangements for the effective implementation of agreed actions.</p>	<p>Audit recommendations reported to the Management Team.</p> <p>Management letter circulated to the Standards Committee for consideration and discussion</p> <p>Audit findings reported to FRA who scrutinise the effective Service response against an agreed action plan.</p>

5. Dimension 3: Structures and Processes

A Local Authority needs to establish effective political and managerial structures and processes to govern decision-making and the exercise of authority within the organisation. A Local Authority should maintain arrangements to:

- define the roles and responsibilities of Members and officers to ensure accountability, clarity and ordering of the Authority’s business
- ensure that there is proper scrutiny and review of all aspects of performance and effectiveness
- demonstrate integrity by ensuring a proper balance of power and authority
- document clearly such structures and processes and ensure that they are communicated and understood to demonstrate openness and inclusivity
- ensure such structures and processes are kept up-to-date and adapted to accommodate change.

Balance of Power and Authority	
CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
a) Put in place clearly documented protocols governing relationships between Members and officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Standards of conduct of officers, and their relationships with Members are set out in the Standing Orders for Business, Code of Conduct, and Service Policies and Instructions. ❑ Code of Conduct governing Member/Officer relations. <p>The above are monitored and reviewed by the Standards Committee.</p>
b) Ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of Members and senior officers are clearly defined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Roles and responsibilities for Members and officers defined through the Service’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegation • Detailed job descriptions for Senior Officers • Role description for Monitoring Officer • Financial regulations defining CFO, Clerk and Treasurer roles. • Code governing Member/Officer relations adopted by the FRA.

Roles and Responsibilities – Members	
<p>c) Ensure that Members meet on a formal basis regularly to set the strategic direction of the Authority and to monitor service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The FRA meet regularly in an annual cycle of FRA and Committee meetings, briefings and seminars. The Committee structure has recently been reviewed and strengthened. ❑ Regular meetings are held between the Chief Fire Officer and leading Members. ❑ This structure supports the close involvement of Members in establishing the strategic direction of the Authority and monitoring its progress.
<p>d) Develop and maintain a scheme of delegated or reserved powers, which should include a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for the collective decision of the Authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Scheme of Delegation in place.
<p>e) 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Standing orders for the conduct of business and financial regulations in place. ❑ The Service Policy and Instructions regularly reviewed and updated and available on the intranet. ❑ Committee structure review incorporates increased Member scrutiny of policy development and compliance with financial regulations.

<p>f) Put in place arrangements to ensure that Members are properly trained for their roles and have access to all relevant information, advice and resources as necessary to enable them to carry out their roles effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Package of support for Members led by the Corporate Services Department put in place and regularly reviewed. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An induction pack of information • Induction seminars • A Members Training programme monitored by Standards Committee • Members' visits to Stations • Circulation of committee papers <input type="checkbox"/> Access to additional information/background papers/telephone support where necessary.
<p>g) Ensure that the role of the executive member(s) is/are formally defined in writing to include 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not directly applicable – no executive Membership.
<p>h) Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all Members of the local Authority, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly in writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Terms of remuneration are set out in Members' Allowances scheme.
<p>i) Ensure that a Chief Executive or equivalent is made responsible to the Authority for all aspects of operational management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designation of CFO/Chief Executive as head of paid service. <input type="checkbox"/> CFO job description/conditions of employment and statutory provisions. <input type="checkbox"/> Scheme of Delegation.
<p>j) Ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the Authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given to it on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designation of Treasurer as statutory Section 151 Officer. <input type="checkbox"/> The Service's Director of Finance is responsible for ensuring effective financial monitoring, control and reporting systems are in place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ This role is supported by the Service's Financial Regulations which are regularly reviewed and updated. ❑ The above are supported by an internal audit service delivered by Worcestershire County Council through a service level agreement. ❑ Regular financial reports, including statutory reporting requirements submitted to the Audit Committee and the Budget Committee and FRA.
<p>k) 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The designation of the Clerk to the Authority as Monitoring Officer (supported by a service level agreement) and role of the Director of Corporate Services ensure that clear lines of responsibility are in place to support the Service's responsibilities in these areas. ❑ The Standards Committee is responsible for reviewing the operation of the Monitoring Officer role to ensure high standards of compliance are maintained.
<p>l) Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all senior officers, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly in writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Job descriptions are in place for senior officers. ❑ A system of annual performance review and appraisal is in place. ❑ Appropriate pay and conditions of service established and maintained through national pay negotiating mechanisms.
<p>m) 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Code of Conduct for Members.

6. Dimension 4: Risk Management and Internal Control

An Authority needs to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and processes for managing risk.

Together, these arrangements should:

- include making public statements to stakeholders on the Authority’s risk management strategy, framework and processes to demonstrate accountability
- include mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing effectiveness against agreed standards and targets and the operation of controls in practice
- demonstrate integrity by being based on robust systems for identifying, profiling, controlling and monitoring all significant strategic and operational risks
- display openness and inclusivity by involving all those associated with planning and delivering services, including partners
- include mechanisms to ensure that the risk management and control process is monitored for continuing compliance to ensure that changes in circumstances are accommodated and that it remains up-to-date.

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>a) Develop and maintain robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks which involve the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Risk management strategy was adopted. ❑ Corporate risk register has been developed with Member and Senior Management involvement. ❑ Departmental risk registers currently under development. ❑ Registers to be regularly reviewed and updated. ❑ Service’s adopted project management methodology incorporates risk assessment. ❑ Integrated Risk Management Plan is a key element of planning, including use of FSEC software. ❑ Internal/external audit evaluate risks when compiling audit plans.

<p>b) Put in place effective risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and relevant statements of best practice and need to ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and are used economically, efficiently and effectively and in accordance with the statutory and other Authorities that govern their use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Systems of internal control and internal audit function are in place and regularly assessed through audit process. ❑ Controls include financial regulations and standards, which are regularly reviewed. ❑ External audit provide reviews of compliance with statutes, best practice etc.
<p>c) Ensure that services are delivered by trained and experienced people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Skills Profile set for Stations. Station Commanders identify training requirements through completion of an annual training needs analysis. ❑ All new uniform staff enrolled on NVQ. ❑ Individual Training Records provided for all uniformed staff up to Watch Manager. ❑ Integrated Personal Development System introduced. Competence assessed against National Occupational Standards. ❑ Annual Personal Development Review for all staff includes consideration of training and development needs. ❑ IIP accreditation at the Training and Development Centre
<p>d) Put in place effective arrangements for an objective review of risk management and internal control, including internal audit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Regular reports as specified in financial regulations to the Audit Committee and the Budget Committee.
<p>e) Maintain an objective and professional relationship with their external auditors and statutory inspectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Named staff contacts for external audit established to facilitate effective communication. ❑ Regular meetings of the Treasurer and Director of Finance are held with auditors to determine audit strategy and processes.
<p>f) Publish on a timely basis, within the Annual Report, an objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the Authority's risk management and internal control mechanisms and their effectiveness in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Performance Plan incorporates statement and assessment of risk management and internal control mechanisms.

7. Dimension 5: Standards of Conduct

The openness, integrity and accountability of individuals within a local Authority form the cornerstone of effective Corporate Governance. The reputation of the Authority depends on the standards of behaviour of everyone in it, whether Members, employees or agents contracted to it.

Therefore, Members and senior officers of a local Authority will need to:

- exercise leadership by conducting themselves as role models for others within the Authority to follow
- define the standards of personal behaviour that are expected from Members and staff and all those involved in service delivery and put in place arrangements to ensure:
 - accountability, through establishing systems for investigating breaches and disciplinary problems and taking actions, where appropriate, including arrangements for redress
 - effectiveness in practice through monitoring their compliance
 - that objectivity and impartiality are maintained in all relationships to demonstrate integrity
 - that such standards are documented and clearly understood to display openness and inclusivity and are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are kept up-to-date.

CIPFA/SOLACE Code Requirements	HWFRS Measures to Comply with Requirements
<p>a) Develop and adopt formal codes of conduct defining the standards of personal behaviour to which individual Members, officers and agents of the Authority are required to subscribe and put in place appropriate systems and processes to ensure that they are complied with.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Code of Conduct for Members & Code of Conduct governing Member/Officer relations in place. These Codes are monitored and reviewed by the Standards Committee. ❑ Standing Orders for conduct of business of the Authority and Confidential Reporting (“whistleblowing”) policy and procedure are in place. ❑ A comprehensive package of SPIs is in place to ensure the highest standards of conduct are maintained.
<p>b) Put in place arrangements to ensure that Members and employees of the Authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Service Policy on Hospitality and Hospitality Registers are in place. These will be monitored and reviewed by the Standards Committee. ❑ Service contract and procurement procedures and guidelines are in place.

<p>c) Put in place arrangements to ensure that their procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and to monitor their continuing compliance in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Key policies (for example, Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing) are reported to FRA.❑ Standards Committee responsible for oversight of continuing compliance and good practice.❑ Complaints, grievance and appeals procedures.❑ Ethical audit undertaken by Standards Committee.
<p>d) Put in place arrangements for Whistleblowing to which staff and all those contracting with the Council have access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Confidential reporting (“Whistleblowing”) policy in place and published throughout the Service (and reported to FRA).❑ Complaints, grievance and appeals procedures.❑ The Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing these arrangements.

19. CORPORATE SERVICES UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members of the progress within Corporate Services for the Management of Risk and Business Continuity Management, Asset Management and the ICT Strategy within the Authority.
-

Background

2. The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance requires it to establish a systematic strategy, framework and process to manage risk. A statement and assessment of the effectiveness of these arrangements must be published regularly. Risk Management and Business Continuity are key objectives in Performance Planning for the Authority.

Risk Management and Business Continuity

Strategic Risk

3. The strategy for risk management approved by Members in June 2004 has now been reviewed with no major changes identified.
4. A formal review of the Strategic Register will take place on 19 July 2006 with Group Leaders and Officers of the Principal Management Team to revisit the identification, mitigating of key risks and amend as necessary. The amended Register will be presented to the Authority's meeting in September for approval.
5. The overall responsibility for ensuring risk is effectively managed lies with the Authority, advised by Principal Officers and the Corporate Risk Manager of the Service.
6. The overall objective of the Risk Register is to ensure the Authority identifies strategic risks and that it uses the most cost effective control of those risks to ensure that they are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level. Systems are in place to track and report upon existing and emerging risks that could cause damage to the Authority or its stakeholders.
7. The Service continues to embrace the key principles of risk management through its Integrated Risk Management Planning process, the adoption of risk assessment in its strategic planning and performance arrangements and the integration of risk assessment into its major project planning processes.

Departmental Risk Registers

8. Further development of Departmental Risk Registers continues to be a key objective for Corporate Services; the next stage in this process is well underway.

Business Continuity

9. Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a statutory requirement for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to undertake. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires the Fire and Rescue Service to have a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in place to ensure services can contribute to an emergency response when required. It seeks to ensure services are protected against loss of day to day functions. The BCM will be assessed under 5.2.5 key lines of enquiry (KLOE) of the 'Stronger and Safer Communities' heading in the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA).
10. BCM is a management led process that assists in the identification and planning against risk. The strong link of the two references of both Risk and Business Continuity will ensure the smooth running of the Service's objectives, the infrastructure and Service provisions. The BCP process shares dynamic links with other initiatives in the Service from an operational perspective to risk management and information security.
11. The strategic framework to the policy under development will be presented to Members at the September FRA meeting and will set out key roles and responsibilities for individual Principal Management, Officers, Managers, Service representatives and Members. The policy will outline the Business Continuity Plan structure fully integrated into Strategic and Departmental Risk Registers following consultation with all interested parties including Representative Bodies.

Facilities Management

Asset Management

12. The Asset Management Plan (AMP) was developed to support the effective management of the Fire and Rescue Service's Property Portfolio. The original draft plan was presented to Members on 19 March 2004. The plan is a live document which requires reviewing regularly to reflect IRMP requirements and any ongoing changes throughout the Service. In 2005 the Service moved to a new Service Headquarters. The AMP sets out strategic direction for the management of all Fire and Rescue Service property for future years. This will maximise the Service's asset base in support of delivering its strategic objectives and incorporating any changes recommended and agreed through the Fire Service Emergency Cover Review (FSEC) and the Property Strategy Group.
13. Following the findings from FSEC the Asset Plan is being reviewed and updated to reflect the outcomes. Other influences to the plan will be the move to a new Service Headquarters and the necessity to relocate support services from Hylton Road.

- 14 Further changes to the plan will be reflected in a report to Members in September following an extensive consultative review of the disposals and acquisition of new locations to ensure continued robust joint working between FSEC/Service Delivery and Facilities Management on emerging prioritisation.

ICT Strategy 2005-2009

Strategy Drivers

15. The main strategic drivers for the Fire Service (Service) remain the Modernisation agenda. Breaking this down to specific project areas within the Service, the strategic drivers become Regional Control, IRMP, FSEC, Firelink, IPDS, IEG, Best value and document management.
16. The deadline for Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) has now passed and has been replaced with transformational Government (t-Government)
17. The e-Government Unit strategy document describes a shift from e-government, characterised by a focus on investing in IT infrastructure, to transformational ‘t-government’ where the benefits of these investments are realised in terms of real service improvements and efficiency savings. This concept is at the heart of the government’s new vision and strategy for technology in government. At present it is unclear now that e-gov has expired what, if any, targets will be reported against t-gov.

Strategic Objectives

18. The overall objectives remain:
- To provide a modern and responsive ICT infrastructure and an ICT Department that supports the Service in all its business objectives.
 - To develop an Information and Network Architecture, which is:
 - designed to provide appropriate, timely and accurate information to any authorised person, using any technology, at any time and at any location.
 - capable of enabling the Service to meet its e-government targets.
 - capable of enabling the Service to move towards independence from WCC where that is mutually beneficial.
 - To continuously develop and improve the mobilising infrastructure and the use of mobile data devices, whilst endeavouring to ensure that the Service will be well placed to take advantage of the Firelink and FiReControl projects when they come to fruition.
 - To increase overall efficiency and cost effectiveness by streamlining Service processes and performing them electronically where appropriate.
 - To make the fullest possible use of existing software and facilities, where possible without enhancement or upgrade.

- To ensure that the Service develops its own professional and technical ICT support and training staff to support the infrastructure, the projects and the users of all systems.
- To develop the use of Computer Based training (CBT).
- To enter into collaborative arrangements with other organisations when it is appropriate to do so.
- To develop the Fire and Rescue Service culture so that:
 - electronic methods are the preferred methods.
 - the Intranet becomes the accepted source of FRS information (including forms and incoming and outgoing documents).

Objectives 2006/7

19. Continuing on from 2005/06, the following strategies continue:

- Roll-out of a document management system that meets the business requirements of the Service.
- Learning Resource International (LRI) platform for the delivery of IT/IS applications to deliver a range of 10 training packages.
- CFRMIS the community fire safety replacement of the SAFFIRE package has begun. The system is in the project evaluation phase. Training has commenced on the pilot system prior to full project rollout.
- Performance Management System is in the advanced stages of an ITT.
- Completion of the internal voice communications rollout to wholetime/day crewed Stations. This is currently being piloted at Kidderminster, Headquarters and Droitwich.
- Replacement Finance system that will build on the current sage 200 and provide enhanced reporting facilities.

Background Papers

Risk Management Strategy 2004
Asset Management Plan 2004

20. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report

1. To receive the annual report from the Authority's Standards Committee.
-

Background

2. The Standards Committee has agreed that an annual report be prepared for submission to the Authority each June and submitted to the Standards Board for England if required. This annual report summarises the work of the Standards Committee for the period April 2005 to April 2006.
3. The Standards Committee was established under section 53 of the Local Government Act 2000, which required the Authority to adopt a code of conduct to replace its existing one, and to incorporate all the mandatory provisions of the Model Code of Conduct issued by the Secretary of State.
4. The Committee's role includes promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Members of the Authority; assisting Members to observe the code of conduct; advising the Authority on the adoption or revision of the code of conduct; monitoring the operation of the code of conduct; advising, training or arranging to train the Members of the Authority on matters relating to the code of conduct; and conducting investigations into breaches of the Code.
5. Regulations currently provide that an Authority's Standards Committee should consist of a minimum of three Members (including one Independent Member) and that where a Standards Committee has more than three members at least 25% are Independent Members. (An Independent Member is a person who is not a member or an officer of that or any other relevant authority.)
6. The Membership has changed during the reporting period. Until December 2005 the Committee comprised two Independent Members, (Dr Murray Mylechreest and Mr Robert Rogers) who are also Independent Members of the Standards Committees of Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council respectively (Mr Rogers is Chairman of the Herefordshire Committee and Dr Mylechreest is Vice-Chairman of Worcestershire County Council's Standards and Ethics Committee) and two Members of the Authority: Mr RG Farmer and Mr R. Preece. In November the Committee recommended the appointment of three additional Independent Members: Mr Colin Emeny, and Mr Richard Gething and Mr David Stevens, the last two named also being Independent Members of Herefordshire Council's Standards Committee. The Authority confirmed these appointments in December 2005.
7. The Committee has sought to avoid duplicating the work of the constituent authorities in such matters as training and to ensure that its work is proportionate. It has therefore operated on the basis that it will meet as business requires and in addition hold an annual review meeting.

8. In 2005/2006 this has necessitated the Committee meeting three times. The Committee considered the matters set out below.

National Review Of The Code Of Conduct For Members

9. The Committee reported in its last Annual Report that the Standards Board for England had conducted a review of the content of the Code by the Minister of State for Local and Regional Government. The Board's stated aim was to "*to ensure that the Code of Conduct is an easily understood living document that takes into account the realities of serving local communities as a member of a local authority.*" Having completed this exercise the Board submitted recommendations for change to the Standards Board for England
10. In December 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a discussion paper which responded in particular to the 10th report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Graham Committee), a report of the ODPM Select Committee on the role and effectiveness of the Standards Board for England and to the recommendations of the Standards Board itself.
11. The Committee has noted in particular the Government's response to the recommendations of the Standards Board for England's (SBE's) review of the Code of Conduct. The Government has agreed that amendments to the Code should be made along the lines suggested by the SBE, including making the Code clearer and simpler, but maintaining a rigorous approach to the identification of serious misconduct; amending the regime for declaring interests and speaking at Council meetings particularly for Members who serve on other public bodies; making changes to the arrangements for determining whether conduct in private life should fall within the ambit of the code; and amending the rules on the reporting of allegations by Members to reduce the number of vexatious complaints.
12. The Committee has made the following principal observations:
- It supports the view that there would be benefit in making the Code of Conduct simpler and clearer. In particular this would help to ensure that it was more readily understood by the Public and would also assist Standards Committees in their role.
 - That whilst greater clarity over what constitutes serious misconduct would be helpful it is essential that ultimately there should be local discretion in determining whether a matter falls within that definition. The presumption should be that matters will be dealt with locally. In extending decision powers to local Committees it is also important that local Committees have available to them an adequate armoury of penalties which they could impose.
 - That in considering what conduct might be considered serious enough to be referred to the SBE there might be merit in a "prominence test", so that, for example, if there were to be a case against a Leader of a Council or other prominent person that might best be dealt with centrally.
 - In relation to amending the regime for declaring interests the Committee has particularly highlighted the need for greater clarity on whether there could be

considered to be a conflict of interest as a result of membership of another public body.

- The Committee supports the SBE's position that certain behaviour outside official duties should continue to be regulated. The public's perception of suitability for office is based on actions in both private and public life.
 - The Committee has supported the SBE's position in relation to reporting breaches of the Code, "whistleblowing"; and vexatious complaints, removing the duty to report breaches, including protection against intimidation of complainants and witnesses and taking greater steps to discourage vexatious complaints. It has also suggested that clarification on how to deal with a situation where, despite no longer being required to do so, a Member reported a breach by another Member might be useful.
 - Finally the Committee has emphasised that it is important that the SBE provides appropriate training and support to Monitoring Officers as reflected in the Government's response.
13. The Committee has submitted a response on behalf of the Authority to the Standards Board's discussion paper and this is available on request.

Independent Membership

14. It was reported to the Authority last year that the Committee has reviewed the 10th report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Graham Committee), which had looked at a number of areas including the management and enforcement of codes of conduct including declarations of interest and made a number of recommendations.
15. One of these recommendations proposed that legislation should be introduced requiring Standards Committees to have a majority of Independent Members and an Independent Chair. We recommended to the Authority that there would be merit, irrespective of whether or not legislation was to be forthcoming in appointing up to two additional Independent Members. The Authority endorsed this view. Having considered the applications received and conducted interviews the Committee eventually recommended three appointments, which the Authority confirmed.
16. In its discussion paper referred to above the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister supported the view that all Chairmen of Standards Committees, should be independent, something this Authority has agreed in respect of its own Committee, but does not intend to propose that a majority of Members should be independent, "*considering it important to ensure the local ownership of standards by all Members*". The Graham Committee's position in contrast as set out in its recommendation was that: "*The Government should introduce, as a matter of urgency, secondary legislation to require a majority of independent members and an independent chair for Standards Committees and Sub-Committees in England. This is a critical element of our proposals to improve the existing system and to lay the ground for the introduction of the locally based system*".

Ethical Audit

17. Public confidence in the integrity of local democracy is vital, and is the main aim of the national ethical framework. The Committee has decided that is opportune to take stock and review how the Authority is responding to the requirements of the ethical framework. by undertaking an ethical audit.
18. An ethical audit assesses the degree to which ethical standards play a part in decision making, both on the part of the authority and also the individuals elected to it. It may serve either as an assurance that the authority's ethical house is in order or it may act as early warning of blind spots that could lead to reputational damage. It is a demonstrable assessment of the reputation, both actual and perceived of the organisation and also acts as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.
19. Key elements of the audit will include:
 - An evidence-based assessment of Members' familiarity with the Code of Conduct.
 - A similar assessment of members' awareness of the role and function of their Standards Committee.
 - A canvas of views on the availability and quality of advice upon ethical issues.
 - A view of training programmes and the induction of new members, with particular regard to frequency, content, attendance and quality of the presentation.
 - An evidence-based assessment of the extent to which ethical practice is embedded in the authority's transaction of business.
 - Consultation with stakeholders on the way the organisation is seen by them.
 - A check that documentation (declarations of interests, hospitality, etc) is accurately kept and updated.
20. It is intended that any questionnaire delivered to stakeholders will if possible be incorporated within the Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation process, so as to avoid duplication and streamline the consultation
21. The Committee's intention is that the ethical audit should be helpful to the Authority. It is a significant piece of work which the Committee aims to complete by the end of 2006.

Protocol On The Use Of Resources

22. The National Statutory Code of Conduct for Councillors provides that a Councillor when using council resources must act in accordance with the Council's requirements and ensure such resources are not used for political purposes (except in certain specified circumstances). The Standards Board for England strongly recommended that local authorities should adopt protocols to guide Members in this area but to date have not issued any model text or detailed guidance.

23. The Committee recommended a protocol on use of resources to the Authority. This was designed as a simple user-friendly document which at the same time offered sound guidance for Members. The Committee noted, however, that detailed provisions remain to be developed to govern the use of ICT resources. The Authority has adopted the document, noting the further work to be completed.

Annual Assembly Of Standards Committees

24. The Standards Board for England have been hosting an annual conference of standards committees since 2001. These occasions have become important events in both training and developing Standards Committee Members and also allowing for a series of high-level debates with government ministers and other stakeholders in developing the ethical framework for local government.
25. The Fourth Assembly, held on 5/6 September 2005 at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Birmingham, was entitled “Ethical Standards – In Your Hands” and focused on developing participants’ skills in dealing with investigations and local hearings.
26. The fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees: Bridging the Gap: towards effective local regulation is to be held in Birmingham on 16-17 October 2006. The stated purpose is, “to encourage delegates to assess where their authority is now in terms of delivering on the criteria that the ethical framework, their communities and others within the local government family expect of them and provide ideas and best practice for driving change and improvement.”
27. The Committee was represented at the 2005 Conference and will also be represented at the 2006 Conference.

West Mercia Independent Members’ Forum

28. The SBE has encouraged the development of regional forums to support Independent Members of Standards Committees in carrying out their role and fulfilling their responsibilities, although this is a matter for local decision. In preference to a West Midlands Forum a forum for Independent Members of Standards Committees in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire has been established to enable Independent Members to share experience and learning. The forum meets twice a year and Independent Members on the Committee have been represented at these events. The most recent event, held in Herefordshire in February 2006 focused on experiences of conducting local investigations into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, given Herefordshire Council’s Standards Committee’s practical experience in these matters.

Recommendation

The Clerk recommends that the Authority notes the Annual Report of the Standards Committee.

Background Papers

Agenda papers of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 18 November, 2005, 6 January, 2006 and 5 April 2006.

21. COMMUNITY EVENTS

Purpose of Report

1. To note Community Events for the year ahead.
-

Background

2. Community Events offer the opportunity for Members and local communities to meet their Firefighters, many of whom are Retained Firefighters who live and work within these same communities.
3. The events allow the Service to present both Community Fire Safety information by demonstrations and other visual displays, and other operational information relating to the service the Service provides. The events vary but each Station commits considerable time and effort to making public access fun and informative.

STATION	DATE	TIME	VENUE	EVENT BEING HELD
Pershore	29 May 2006	10:00 – 16:00	Pershore Station	Open Day
Worcester	03 June 2006	11:00 – 15:00	Station 21	SureStart Launch
Worcester	10 June 2006	10:00 – 18:00	Arrow Valley	Dragon Boat Race
Ewyas Harold	16 June 2006	1900 - 2100	Ewyas Harold	Open Evening with refreshments
Kidderminster	17 June 2006	TBC		
Ledbury	17 June 2006	TBC	Ledbury Station	Open Day
Droitwich	24 June 2006	12:00 – 16:00	Droitwich Station	Open Day
Whitchurch	July 2006	TBC	Whitchurch	Carnival
Bromyard	02 July 2006	TBC	Bromyard	Gala
Worcester	08 July 2006	09:00 – 18:00	Stourport Marina	Water Safety Day
Leintwardine	08 July 2006	13:00 – 17:00	Leintwardine School	School Fete
Worcester	09 July 2006	10:00 – 18:00	Worcester	Dragon Boat Festival
Evesham	22 July 2006	TBC	Badsey	Fire Appliance to Badsey Flower Show
Worcester	23 July 2006	11:00 – 15:00	Upton Marina	Water Safety Day
Worcester	29 July 2006	11:00 – 15:00	Station 21	Road Safety Day
Worcester	Late June or mid August	TBC	Arboretum, Worcester	Ethnic minority recruitment day & Community fete
Ross on Wye	06 August 2006	TBC	Ross on Wye	River Carnival
Hereford	19 August 2006	10:30 – 15:30	Hereford	Open Day
Kington	20 August 2006	TBC	Kington	Vintage Car Meeting

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority
12 June 2006

STATION	DATE	TIME	VENUE	EVENT BEING HELD
Upton upon Severn	26 August 2006	TBC	Upton-Upon-Severn Water Festival	Promotion Of Community Fire Safety
Fownhope	28 August 2006	TBC	Woolhope	Fete
Eardisley	28 August 2006	TBC	Eardisley	Carnival and Sports Day
Peterchurch	28 August 2006	TBC	Peterchurch	Sports and Social Day
Stourport	09 September 2006	TBC		
Kingsland	10 September 2006	TBC	Kingsland	BBQ
Worcester	Late September	TBC	Maggs Centre (Opposite Worcester Station)	Rough Sleepers Awareness Day
Bewdley	August	TBC		
Bromsgrove	TBC			
Pebworth	TBC			
Broadway	TBC			
Tenbury	Summer		Tenbury Wells	Open Evening/Social BBQ

Background Papers

None