

Agenda

Councillors

Herefordshire:

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

Worcestershire:

Mr T J Bean, Mr MH Clarke, Mr S J Clee, Mrs M L Drinkwater, Mrs DE Dudley, Mr RJ Farmer, Mr A Fry, Mr A I Hardman, Mr J Holden, Mr PT Mills, Mr P A Mould, Ms DL Nixon, Mr M M G Oborski, Mrs B Passingham, Mr D W Prodger, Mr CT Smith, Mr R M Udall (Chair), Mr J R Webb, Mr GC Yarranton.

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Chair

To elect a Chair of the Authority.

(The convention is that, subject to the requirement for annual election, the Chair and Vice-Chair 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-Chair

To elect a Vice-Chair of the 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 Authority held on Wednesday 16 February 2005 (copy attached – pink pages).

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 (p1-2)

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.3-9)

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. Chief Fire Officer's Report (p.10-21)

To inform Members of Service activities in the last quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

10. Community Safety Update (p.22-27)

To inform Members of Service activities in the last quarter together with Education and Prevention details.

11. 2005/06 Fire Authority Performance Plan (p.28-29)

To seek approval of the Authority's Performance Plan for 2005/06.

12. Annual Report Of The Standards Committee (p.30-33)

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

13. Provisional Budget Outturn 2004/05 (p.34-36)

To provide information on Revenue and Capital outturn for 2004/05 and final details of re-billing costs.

14. Firefighter Pensions and Parental Leave (p.37)

To consider a policy on permitting buy-back of pension service.

15. Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (p.38-40)

To inform Members of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and progress within the Service to enable compliance.

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

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority
Wednesday 16 February, 2005 County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester
(10.30 am)

Minutes

Present

Herefordshire:

Mr GW Davis, Mr KG Grumbley, Brigadier P Jones, Mr R. Preece, Mr DC Taylor.

Worcestershire:

Mr TJ Bean, Mr P Carter, Mr SJ Clee, Mrs EA Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr AI Hardman, Mrs BI Hickling, Mr HJ Martin, Mr PA Mould, Mrs B Passingham, Mr D W Prodger, Mr EJ Sheldon, Mr MJ Shellie, Mr BA Taylor, Mr RM Udall (Chair), Mr D Woodward-Sheath.

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 16 December, 2004 (previously circulated).

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

438. (Agenda item 1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs EM Bew, Mrs ML Drinkwater and Mr JR Webb.

439. (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.)

440. (Agenda item 3) Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

441. (Agenda item 4) Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the Public.

442. Retirement of Chief Fire Officer

The Chair reminded the Authority that it was the final meeting to be attended by Chief Fire Officer Mr David O'Dwyer who was retiring on 17 March 2005.

The Chair paid tribute to Mr O'Dwyer's leadership and dedication and his success in delivering a high performing Fire and Rescue Service in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and wished him a long and happy retirement. Leaders of the other political groups and other Members echoed these sentiments.

In reply Mr O'Dwyer thanked Members for their support, noting the difficult challenges which the Authority had had to face and overcome. He attributed the Service's success to Members and Officers working together as a team and wished the Authority success in achieving further progress.

On behalf of the Authority the Chair also paid tribute to Assistant Chief Officer Frank Norton who was also to retire before the Authority's next meeting.

443 (Agenda item 5) Appointment Of Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

The Authority was invited to approve the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, on the recommendation of the Appointments Etc Committee.

RESOLVED: that the appointment of Mr Paul Hayden as Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive be confirmed.

444. (Agenda item 6) Chief Fire Officer's Report

The Authority was informed of Service activities in the last quarter.

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report, highlighting the publication of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2005/2006. He advised Members that account had been taken of the document in formulating the budget proposals and the Authority's other plans and that a forthcoming seminar would ensure that they were briefed upon it.

He also drew attention to the continued success of the Service's Training and Development Centre in attracting people from other Fire Services to attend courses at the Centre.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- A question was asked about the cost of the programme of what the report referred to as 'reasonable adjustments' to buildings being considered in response to the Disability Discrimination Act and what criteria were to be used in determining whether the proposed adjustments were reasonable. The Chief Fire Officer replied that costings had not been completed. However, cost was not the determining factor in whether or not modifications to buildings were made. The Service was committed to making itself accessible to the public and creating an environment which would encourage the development of a diverse workforce.
- Concern was expressed at the substantial increase in the number of accidents and injuries in comparison with the previous year.

- The Chief Fire Officer clarified the role of the Regional Health and Safety Collaboration Group in promoting best health and safety practice across the West Midlands region.

445. (Agenda Item 7) Budget & Precept For 2005/06

The Authority was asked to consider the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2005/06 and the consequential Council Tax Precept.

The Treasurer presented the report. He noted that the proposed budget of £27.289 million supported by the Audit and Budget Committee was a 5.8% increase on the 2004/05 budget, with 3.5% of the increase being available to support Service growth. This would allow the Authority to reinstate some of the reductions in the 2004/2005 budget enforced on the Authority by the Government.

He drew attention to the proposals set out in the report to increase the level of balances and noted the efficiency gains which the Authority would be required to make to meet Government targets.

Turning to the implications for the Council Tax level he referred to Appendix 7 to the report which detailed the budget of £27.289 million and indicated a 4.6% increase in the Band D rate to £59.09 per annum. He advised that this needed to be adjusted slightly, Malvern Hills District Council having declared a surplus on its collection fund. This adjustment resulted in an additional £10,000 being available to the Authority. A budget of £27.289 million would therefore mean a 4.55% increase in the Band D rate to £59.05 per annum.

This was marginally lower than the forecast reported to the Audit and Budget Committee, made prior to confirmation of the grant settlement and the Council Tax base, that a budget of £27.289 million would mean a 4.9% increase in the Band D rate.

The Government's stated position on capping council tax increases was that it expected the average council tax increase to be below 5%. Account had been taken of this constraint in recommending a budget of £27.289 million. It was noted that a small but valuable increase of £0.046 million could now be obtained, for allocation to the Authority's priorities, without breaching the 5% limit, if the Authority wished. This would mean a budget of £27.335 million indicating a 4.92% increase in the Band D rate to £59.26 per annum. Paragraph 26 of the report identified the priorities to which the Chief Fire Officer recommended the additional sum should be allocated.

The Treasurer commented briefly on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the possibility that performance reward grant may be secured if targets in the Authority's Local Public Service Agreements with the constituent authorities were met. He advised that because it was not certain that a grant would be secured no account had yet been taken of it in the Authority's financial planning.

He also reported that the Prudential Code indicators had been updated in line with the approach adopted in 2004/2005.

The Treasurer concluded by referring to his personal assurance statement made in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 that he considered the proposed budget to be robust.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that the proposed budget as set out in appendix 7 to the report permitted the Authority to reinstate part, but by no means all, of the programme proposed in the original 2004/2005 budget, prior to it being capped by the Government. There was the opportunity to invest in further service development by increasing the budget by £0.046 million if the Authority wished.

In the course of discussion the following principal points were made:

- That it was important to record that the capping of the 2004/05 budget had had an adverse effect on the Authority's ability to implement the Government's modernisation agenda. The proposed 2005/06 budget would allow some progress to be made in reinstating part of the programme the Authority had originally wished to pursue in 2004/05.
- That the Authority should set the budget at £27.289 million as reported to the Audit and Budget Committee and should not increase that sum by the £0.046 million which could be raised without breaching the 5% Government limit.
- It was noted that the budget provided for the appointment of three community outreach workers. If the additional £0.046 million was raised it was proposed that part of the sum would be used to provide a community out-reach worker for Herefordshire. It was suggested that an additional £25,000 should be added to the budget to finance this post.

An alternative suggestion was made that the three outreach workers should be deployed flexibly, allowing some outreach work to be carried out in Herefordshire.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that the original proposal had been to appoint nine outreach workers to serve the two Counties. On the basis that the Authority could afford to appoint to only three posts his view was that this resource should be deployed where it would make most impact: north Worcestershire. In response to a request he agreed that if a particular problem arose in Herefordshire resources could be deployed to deal with that specific issue.

It was requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting on work undertaken by outreach workers with an assessment of the need for outreach work in Herefordshire.

- That in its publicity material the Service should emphasise the actual sums of money involved in the Authority's budget rather than referring to percentage increases.
- The Treasurer agreed to provide all Members with information showing comparative statistics on precepts set by other Fire Authorities.
- In response to a question about whether performance reward grant from the Authority's Local Public Service Agreements would be available for use in 2005/2006 the Treasurer reiterated that it would be prudent to await confirmation

that the grant had been secured. He envisaged that if received the use of the grant would be considered as part of the 2006/07 budget.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that

- (a) a Revenue Budget, Net Budget Requirement and consequential precept as set out in Appendix 7 to the report, as amended, be approved, setting a Band D Council Tax of £59.05;
 - (b) the Capital Budget and Programme as set out at Appendix 5 to the report be approved;
 - (c) the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out at Appendix 8 to the report be approved; and
 - (d) the Statement of Prudential Code Indicators as set out at Appendix 9 to the report be approved.
446. (Agenda item 8) **Response To The Office Of The Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Consultation Process On Proposals For A New Pension Scheme/Amendment To Existing Pension Arrangements For Firefighters**

Further to Minute no 431 the Authority received an update on the response to proposals for changes to the existing Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the introduction of a new Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

It was reported that a further consultation paper, on proposals for new financial arrangements for firefighter pensions, had now been issued by the ODPM. It was proposed that the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to respond on the Authority's behalf.

It was also requested that an update be submitted to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted; and
 - (b) that the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to respond to the consultation document on proposals for new financial arrangements for firefighter pensions issued by the ODPM after consultation with Group Leaders, with an update then being submitted to the Authority's next meeting.
447. (Agenda item 9) **Comprehensive Performance Assessment**

The Authority was asked to note the Authority's Service Improvement Plan developed in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) self-assessment process, the key dates for the review team visit and subsequent reporting arrangements.

It was noted that a response on points of fact and interpretation would need to be submitted to the draft CPA report, to be issued in April, and proposed that the Chief Fire Officer should be authorised to respond.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the Service Improvement Plan be noted; and
- (b) the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to respond to the draft Comprehensive Performance Assessment Report following consultation with Group Leaders.

448. (Agenda item 10) Integrated Risk Management, Second Annual Action Plan 2005/06 Response To Consultation

The Authority considered a number of issues relating to the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

The report set out progress in implementing the Fire and Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP); the comments and replies received from stakeholders during the consultation for the Authority's IRMP, Draft Second Annual Action Plan 2005/06; and sought approval of the IRMP 2nd Annual Action Plan 2005/06.

RESOLVED: that the Fire and Rescue Authority's Second Annual Action Plan be approved.

449. (Agenda item 11) Pay Verification Study (Phase Two) - Audit Recommendations

Further to Minute no 411 the Authority was informed of progress made against the recommendations contained in the Pay Verification Phase Two study.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

450. (Agenda item 12) The Development Of New Disciplinary And Grievance Policies For Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

The Authority received an update on the arrangements for the introduction of new disciplinary and grievance procedures.

A request that Members of the Disputes Resolution Panel should have the opportunity to comment on the procedures before they were finalised was acknowledged.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that to a great extent the procedures were prescribed in the Grey Book. Discussions were currently ongoing regarding areas for local resolution.

RESOLVED: that progress made on this subject be noted.

451. (Agenda item 13) Best Value Performance Plan 2005/06 - Priorities And Non-Priorities

The Authority considered the new Fire Authority Vision Statement, Service objectives, priorities and non-priorities as set out in the report.

RESOLVED: that the new Fire Authority Vision Statement service objectives, priorities and non-priorities as appended to the report be approved in order to facilitate preparation of the Best Value Performance Plan 2005/06.

452. (Agenda item 14) ICT STRATEGY

The Authority considered the Service's Information and Communications Technology Strategy.

The Strategy document had been presented to Members without the detailed supporting appendices. Following discussion Members expressed support for the general direction set by the Strategy. However, it was considered that the appendices needed to be made available to Members so that they could give more consideration to some of the detail, including costings, timeframes, scope for sharing services with partner organisations, customer focus and the Gershon Review of efficiency savings. It was proposed that a report should be submitted to the Audit and Budget Committee.

The Authority expressed its support for sharing provision of ICT services with partners where appropriate.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Information and Communications Technology Strategy as appended to the report be endorsed;**
- (b) that the Authority's support for sharing provision of ICT services with partners where appropriate be noted;**
- (c) that the supporting appendices accompanying the Strategy document be circulated to all Members; and**
- (d) a report on the Strategy be submitted to the Audit and Budget Committee.**

453. (Agenda item 15) 2005/2006 Grant Allocation To Fire And Rescue Services In Support Of Fire Control New Burdens – Firelink: Project Update And Funding Arrangements

The Authority received and noted an update on the national Regional Fire Control Project and the Firelink project.

454. (Agenda item 16) Standards Committee Membership

The Authority considered reappointing the Independent Members of the Standards Committee for a further term of office.

RESOLVED: that Dr M Mylechreest and Mr R Rogers be reappointed as Independent Members on the Authority's Standards Committee for a further three year term of office to run until the annual meeting of the Authority in June 2008.

In closing the meeting the Chair commented that this was his last meeting in the chair as by convention it reverted to a Herefordshire Councillor. He also noted that Worcestershire County Council were to hold elections in May and several Members were retiring as Councillors. He thanked Members for their support through what had been a difficult but ultimately productive period for the Authority.

Members in turn expressed their satisfaction with the consensual way in which the Authority had conducted its business.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

Chair.....

7. APPOINTMENT OF CLERK/MONITORING OFFICER

Purpose of Report

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

2. The Authority is constituted under the Hereford and Worcester Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997.
3. The Order required the appointment of a Chief Fire Officer and a Treasurer. In addition under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Authority was also required to make appointments to the statutory positions of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, and Chief Financial Officer as defined by Section 151 of the Local Government Act, 1972.
4. It was always anticipated under those arrangements that the Chief Fire Officer would hold the role of Head of Paid Service. In December 1997 the Authority agreed that the Treasurer and Section 151 Officer should be Mr M Weaver, Director of Financial Services with Worcestershire County Council. The Combination Scheme Order made no provision for the appointment of a Clerk to administer meetings and deal with the legal and procedural matters for the Authority, although in making its appointment to the post of Monitoring Officer in 1997 the Authority linked the two roles, agreeing that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should be Mr N Pringle, Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council.
5. In March 2004, on the recommendation of the Authority's Standards Committee, the Authority agreed a description of the role of Monitoring Officer, as appended to this report.

Issues

6. Mr Pringle has indicated that he would like the Authority to permit him to relinquish the formal role of Clerk/Monitoring Officer on the basis that, with the Authority's approval, Ms M.E. Rosenthal, County Secretary and Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for Herefordshire Council would replace him.
7. Through pressure of work on him as Chief Executive as Herefordshire Council Ms Rosenthal has deputised for Mr Pringle on a number of occasions. She is also responsible for managing the provision of Legal and Committee Services to the Authority, which support the role of Monitoring Officer, under Service Level Agreements with Herefordshire Council.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive recommends that the Authority confirm the appointment of Ms M.E. Rosenthal, County Secretary and Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for Herefordshire Council, as Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority.

Background Papers

None

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

Functions of the Monitoring Officer

The list of functions below reflects the statutory duties and powers and associated responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer.

Statutory role

- **Ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making.** After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer will report to the Authority if he or she considers that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or if any decision or omission has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered.
- **Receiving reports.** The Monitoring Officer will receive and act on reports made by ethical standards officers and decisions of the case tribunals.
- **Conducting investigations.** The Monitoring Officer will conduct investigations into matters referred by ethical standards officers and make reports or recommendations in respect of them to the Standards Committee.
- **Supporting the Standards Committee.** The Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Standards Committee.

Other Statutory provisions

- **Duty to Provide Sufficient Resources to the Monitoring Officer.** The Authority will provide the Monitoring Officer with such officers, accommodation and other resources as are in their opinion sufficient to allow their duties to be performed.
- **Restrictions on posts.** The Monitoring Officer cannot be the Chief Finance Officer or the Head of Paid Service.

Associated Responsibilities

- **Maintaining the Constitution.** The Monitoring Officer will maintain an up-to-date version of the Authority's Constitution and will ensure that it is widely available for consultation by Members of the Authority, staff and the public.
- **Proper officer for access to information.** The Monitoring Officer will ensure that the Authority's decisions, together with the reasons for those decisions and relevant officer reports and background papers are made publicly available as soon as possible.
- **Providing advice.** The Monitoring Officer will provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, and probity to all Members of the Authority.

(Note: The Chief Fire Officer has been designated as Head of Paid Service and the Treasurer has been designated as the Chief Finance Officer.)

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.
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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 and Budget Committee (11 seats)
 - Best Value Policy and Performance Committee (5 seats)
6. There is also a Dispute Resolution Panel (consisting of 6 Members) which was established to reflect the requirements of the National Scheme of Conditions of Service.
7. The Authority has also appointed a Standards Committee comprising two independent persons, (Dr M Mylechreest and Mr R Rogers who are also independent Members of the Standards Committees of Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council respectively); and two Members of the Authority, each with a named substitute: Brigadier P Jones and Mr PA Mould. (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 appointed an informal advisory body to work with officers on the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
9. 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 Chair and Vice-Chair 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.
10. It is suggested that for similar reasons the Authority confirm that Group Leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority, should not serve on the Standards Committee.
11. The terms of reference of the Authority's Committees are appended.

Issues

Standards Committee

12. The Authority agreed in February, 2005 that Dr M Mylechreest and Mr R Rogers be reappointed as Independent Members on the Authority's Standards Committee for a further three year term of office to run until the annual meeting of the Authority in June 2008. The Authority had agreed in establishing the Standards Committee in 2002 that there should be provision for Independent Members to serve for further periods of office and that an Independent Member's term of office should cease if a Member ceased to be an Independent Member of the respective constituent authority's Standards Committee.
13. 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.
14. The Authority's Standards Committee was informed in March 2005 of the recommendations of the Committee on Standards In Public Life's Tenth Report, which had looked at a number of areas, including the management and enforcement of codes of conduct, including declarations of interest across local government, the National Health Service and other public bodies. Recommendation 19 of the report, proposed that legislation should be introduced requiring Standards Committees to have a majority of Independent Members and an Independent Chair.
15. The Committee concluded that there would be merit, irrespective of whether or not legislation was to be forthcoming, in recommending the Authority to make arrangements to appoint up to two additional Independent Members. The Committee considered that it would be desirable that the additional Member(s) had Standards Committee experience and training but did not think there was any particular merit in appointees being drawn, if possible, from the independent membership of the Standards Committees of the constituent authorities, as had been the practice to date.
16. The Authority therefore needs to determine whether it wishes to appoint one or more additional independent Members and, if it does, whether it wishes to vary its practice

of drawing appointees, if possible, from the independent membership of the Standards Committees of the constituent authorities.

17. If the Authority does wish to appoint one or more additional independent Members an advertisement will have to be placed and applications invited. The Clerk would then arrange to interview shortlisted candidates with a view to recommending an appointment or appointments to the Authority.
18. Since its establishment the Standards Committee has agreed that one of the Independent Members should take the chair and that the office should alternate annually between them, the other Independent Member being appointed Vice-Chair. It is suggested that the Authority formally confirms the view that Independent Members should hold serve as Chair and Vice-Chair on the Standards Committee as its policy with the Chair alternating each year between a Herefordshire based Independent Member and a Worcestershire based Independent Member .

Disputes Resolution Panel

19. In September 2002 the Authority appointed a Disputes Resolution Panel in line with the requirements of the National Conditions of Service then in place. The Panel was provided with a very specific remit: to deal with dispute resolution as set out at paragraph 2 of Section X of the National Scheme of Conditions of Service. No disputes reached the stage requiring the Panel to be convened. Changes to the National Conditions of Service mean that the Panel is redundant. Negotiations are continuing at local level on the future model for conflict resolution and a further report will be made to the Authority in due course. It is proposed that no appointments be made at this time and if an issue arises in the meantime the matter be dealt with by the Chief Fire Officer after consultation with the Group Leaders.

Disciplinary Appeals

20. The Authority received a report in February 2005 on the introduction of new disciplinary and grievance procedures. Negotiations are continuing at local level and the Authority will be kept informed.

Local Government Association Appointments

21. All Fire and Rescue Authorities are entitled to a place and a vote on the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Service Forum. A decision needs to be taken therefore on who will fill that place and exercise a vote on behalf of this Authority.
22. 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 14 June, 2004 allocated places on the General Assembly to the Leaders of the Political Groups on the Authority. The Authority needs to determine how many places it wishes to take up and how those places should be allocated.

Voting

23. 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).
24. On 14 June 2004 the Authority allocated the corporate vote to the Chair (or in his absence the Vice-Chair) and divided the 13 service votes on the basis of proportionality. The Vice-Chair (or in his absence the Chair) was also allocated the place and vote available on the LGA Fire Service Forum.

West Midlands Regional Management Board

25. 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 was advised in December 2003 that appointments are required to be made on a politically proportionate basis. This provides for 1 Conservative Group nomination, 1 Labour Group nomination and 1 Liberal Democrat nomination.
26. It is proposed that the Authority consider appointments to be made to the Regional Management Board.

Recommendation

The Clerk recommends:

- a) **that the Authority considers appointments to the offices of Chair and Vice-Chair 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) **the appointment of a Members Steering Group as an informal advisory body to work on the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan be confirmed;**
- d) **that the Authority determines whether it wishes to recruit any additional Independent Members to the Authority's Standards Committee at this stage;**
- e) **that one of the Independent Members should take the chair of the Standards Committee with another Independent Member being appointed Vice-Chair, with the Chair alternating each year between a Herefordshire based independent member and a Worcestershire based independent member;**

- f) confirm that Group Leaders, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority, should not serve on the Standards Committee;**
- g) that the redundancy of the Disputes Resolution Panel be noted and a report on a future model for conflict resolution be made to the Authority in due course;**
- h) 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 Chair or his nominee.**
- i) that it be determined who will hold the place and vote available to the Authority on the LGA's Fire Service Forum; and**
- j) 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 Combined Fire 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 AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

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

To approve the Authority's accounts.

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

To monitor and report on the performance of internal audit.

To agree the external audit plan.

BEST VALUE, POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

To consider the Best Value Performance Plans and reviews prior to submission to the Combined Fire 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.

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;

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- 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.

9. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER'S REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of Service activities in the last quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.
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Appointment of New Chief Fire Officer

1. Councillor Richard Udall, outgoing Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority, is pleased to introduce Paul Hayden MSc, MA, MIFireE as the new Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive.
2. Paul, who started his career in the West Midlands in 1978, has also served at the Fire Service College, Suffolk Fire Service and in Norfolk as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
3. Councillor Udall said "I am delighted to be able to welcome Paul Hayden as our new Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, I am confident that he will bring his extensive experience and talents to our Authority. Paul will be able to meet the challenges ahead and will make the changes needed to ensure that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service continue as a modern, progressive and high performing Service."

Chief Officers Induction

4. As part of his induction process, the Chief Fire Officer has held initial meetings with his opposite numbers in each of the West Midlands Regions Fire and Rescue Services, the Military Liaison Officer, Chief Ambulance Officer and Chief Constable. In addition, he has set out to meet as many members of staff and staff representatives as possible. These informal discussions have been very wide ranging and have provided an interesting insight into the Service. Three key questions have also been asked of each group:
 - a) What are you most proud of or what do you think works well already?
 - b) What causes you the most frustration in trying to get on with your job at a local level?
 - c) If we could change just one thing to make you even more effective, what would it be?
5. There will inevitably be some members of staff who have missed a visit due to leave or other commitments, however, the programme was designed to include each department or administrative centre, workshops, stores, training school, Officers' groups, Retained Stations, and Wholetime watches. This has resulted in more than sixty visits over five weeks. The key issues raised are being collated and feedback for staff and Group Leaders on the Chief Fire Officers "first impressions" will be provided through a series of briefings and a special article for the service magazine

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“Grapevine” due out in July. More detailed feedback will be reported to Members at the next Authority meeting in September.

Operational Statistics

6. Members are requested to note the levels of operational activity experienced by the Service for the financial year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 in comparison to last year 2003/04.
7. In comparison to last year (2003/04), there has been an overall decrease in the total number of calls attended by the Service. The total number of all fires attended has decreased, with a significant decrease in Secondary Fires. The total number of Special Service Incidents has increased slightly whilst the overall number of False Alarm calls has decreased slightly.
8. The total number of incidents attended by the Brigade in the financial year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 was 9167. This represents a decrease of 16% in comparison to last year.
9. During the financial year 2004/05, the Service saw a 32% decrease in the total number of fires attended.
10. Overall, the Service experienced a decrease of 13% in FDR1 fires (primary), a decrease of 217, 45% in secondary fires, for example, refuse/grass and a slight decrease of 6% in chimney fires.
11. The number of Special Service Incidents (road traffic collisions, lift rescue, etc) has increased slightly by 6%.
12. The overall number of False Alarm Calls attended, (which consists of the three categories False Alarm Malicious, False Alarm Good Intent and Automatic Fire Detection Apparatus calls) during the financial year 2004/05, decreased by 7% when compared to last year, (4263 in 2003/04 and 3975 in 2004/05).
13. False Alarm calls caused by Automatic Detection Apparatus have increased slightly by 2% whilst the number of Malicious False Alarm calls attended has decreased by 34%. The number of False Alarm Good Intent calls has also decreased by 21%.

Summary

Decrease	Slight Decrease	Slight Increase	Increase
Total Incidents -1708 (-16%)			
Total Fires -1525 (-32%)		Special Service Incidents	
Primary Fires -217 (-13%)	Chimney Fires	+105 (+6%)	
Secondary Fires -1297 (-45%)	-11 (-6%)		
	Total False Alarms	False Alarm Apparatus	
False Alarm Malicious -105 (-34%)	-288 (-7%)		

False Alarm Good Intent -241 (-21%)		+58 (+2%)	
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Operational Activity

Appliance to Sri Lanka

14. On 28 April 2005 Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service donated a decommissioned appliance to Sri Lanka after their vehicles were lost in the Tsunami. Sri Lanka cricketers Mittiah Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas, who were playing at New Road, Worcester, received the vehicle on behalf of their country from Chief Fire Officer Paul Hayden. The appliance was originally destined for Chernobyl, as reported to Members in March 2004, however the Fire Service in Ukraine decided it did not want a right-hand drive vehicle.

Hydraulic Cutting Equipment

15. On 21 April 2005 at 3.00am emergency crews were called to an incident in Tyrell's Lane, Lower Bentley where a driver was trapped upside down in the vehicle with his head just inches above water in a ditch. The impact of the incident had thrust a two inch diameter pole through the vehicle's bodywork and the driver's body. The incident happened at 11.00pm and the alarm was raised by passers-by four hours later. The crews made practice cuts using the hydraulic cutting equipment on another piece of tubing before attempting the delicate operation, which may have contributed to saving his life. The driver, who was conscious throughout, was released from the car at approximately 4.30am and taken to the Alexandra Hospital with part of the pole still embedded in his body.

New Headquarters Update

16. Excellent progress continues to be made with the project continuing on programme and within budget. The tender and selection process for the fit out works has been completed and work, including the installation of a sprinkler system has commenced on site. Final details of the staff migration plan have been completed and the move into the building is due to commence in mid September

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Update

17. The CPA process has previously been reported to Members on 16 February 2005. The assessment visit took place between 24 February – 3 March 2005 with positive initial feedback being received from the CPA Assessment Team. The final report is awaited and will be presented to the Authority in due course.

Equality and Diversity

The Equality and Diversity Strategy

18. The strategy has been reviewed to incorporate an expanded area concerning the Authority's approach to disability. This final review also contains details of the Race Equality Scheme review (detailed below).

19. A document outlining the Rights and Responsibilities of employees has been produced, and is designed to increase awareness of the organisation's values and commitment to equality and diversity. This document is currently being consulted upon.
20. A review of the Authority's Equal Opportunities policy is being conducted to update it in line with changes in legislation and organisational progress.
21. The second phase of equality and diversity training has completed its initial pilot, and the results are being reviewed prior to roll out.

The Disability Discrimination Act

22. Access audit results have led to the production of a broad list of potential adjustments. The audit results are currently being quality-proofed by a leading disability consultancy, following which, a strategy for prioritisation of activities will be developed.
23. Guidance on reasonable adjustments within employment will be incorporated into the Equal Opportunities Policy review and will also form an important part in the development of a recruitment strategy.

The Race Equality Scheme

24. A review of the Race Equality Scheme is underway in accordance with our statutory obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The Fairness at Work Advisory Group

25. The group has substantially increased membership, and continues to support the development of the equality and diversity agenda in the Authority.
26. Progress has been made on designing a militaristic/cultural practices questionnaire, which will support the migration from rank to role. Progress in this area will also support the organisation's strategic objectives on culture and leadership during 2005/2006.

Health and Safety

New Appointments

27. The recent appointments to the Health & Safety Unit means that various items, including the Business Plan objectives that were postponed due to vacancies within the department, can now be progressed.

Training

28. During this Quarter the Health and Safety Unit delivered the following training:-
 - A two-day Specialist Accident Investigation Refresher course on 8 and 9 February for specialist accident investigators.
 - A Global Health and Safety Induction day on 7 February for personnel who have joined the Service in the last six months.
 - Input to two Retained Crew Command Courses on 6 and 24 February 2005.

Policy and Training Packages Review

29. The planned review of all Health and Safety policies will now resume following the new appointments. This will also be accompanied by a review of all H & S training packages, which will be issued over the coming year in time for their scheduled annual delivery. It is also anticipated that a training matrix will also be devised which will outline refresher periods for each package.

West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB)

Project P1.1 Management of Health and Safety

30. The Regional Health and Safety Collaboration Group (RHSCG) is continuing to meet on a monthly basis and work continues on the proposed 2006 Health & Safety calendar. Work also continues on a strategy to drive down incidents of slip, trip and fall (STF) and manual handling injuries, which represent a high number of injuries across all Services within the Region.
31. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is currently in the process of developing a policy for the evacuation of certain types of casualties which present particular problems, where possible, drawing upon the knowledge and experience of the other Services in the Region.

Accidents and Injuries

32. The accident rate for the final quarter of 2004/05 shows a significant decrease against the preceding quarter (13 compared to 23) and the previous year's final quarter as shown in the table below (13 compared to 26). The number of RIDDOR reportable accidents (2) is lower than the preceding quarter of the current year (6). Also, compared against Fire and Rescue Services of a like size in the CFOA West Midlands Region, the accident rate remains low.

	Accidents	RIDDOR	% rate on establishment
January – March 2004	26	8	3.1
April – June 2004	21	4	2.6
July – September 2004	26	8	3.1
October – December 2004	23	6	2.7
January – March 2005	13	2	1.65

Employees working past retirement date (50+ Scheme)

33. This scheme will offer people that have reached the age of 50 the chance to take some of their retirement benefits and to be re-employed after a one month break in service. Employees will be offered a twelve month contract, renewable as deemed appropriate by the Service in agreement with the employee. The scheme will run up until the age of 55.
34. The purpose of the scheme is to assist succession planning arrangements and to retain highly skilled and experienced staff in the organisation, who would otherwise have retired from the Service due to the extant Fireman's Pension Scheme.

35. At present H&W has offered one former employee the opportunity to work on a trial basis. Over the next twelve months, the arrangement will be evaluated to assess the benefits to the organisation and to individuals who volunteer to participate in this innovative scheme.

Freedom of Information Requests Update

	Requests received and completed	Requests forwarded to other Agencies
January 2005	4	0
February 2005	2	0
March 2005	2	2 (Fire Safety)
TOTALS	8	2
	10	

36. I will arrange for all letters to be made available for Members' perusal at the meeting.

Training and Development Centre

37. The last quarter of the year has been a very busy period for the Training and Development Centre. During this period, we ran our final crew managers course for staff working the retained duty system. This has been a very successful course and almost 100% of our Retained Supervisory Managers have attended along with a number of Firefighters who had demonstrated potential to progress in the Service. In line with the modernisation agenda, a new supervisory programme is being developed which will be open to both our full time and part time staff.
38. Following the repeal of the Fire Service Discipline Regulations, the Service has now introduced a new system based on ACAS disciplinary guidelines. The centre has delivered extensive training using ACAS specialists to all Senior Managers both uniform and non-uniform in these new procedures and the training has been cascaded to our supervisory level Managers including all Fire Stations.
39. One of the major tasks over the last three months has been collecting and analysing the returns from the Personal Development Reviews. The information gained will be used to inform the courses that we will be running over the next year, together with the identified development needs of our employees.
40. The BA Department has continued to train Firefighters at Smethwick Firehouse in the West Midlands and has again achieved its target of 360 students for the 12 months to 31 March 2005. The course has been recently designed to enable students to face different scenarios under testing but controlled conditions.
41. Work has commenced on the provision of a Real Fire Training Facility at Kidderminster. This will provide a more efficient, effective and flexible way to train our staff and also provide much more control over time and availability.

42. The Commercial Department continues to offer a wide range of courses to commercial clients throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire. We have recently worked in partnership with Worcestershire College of Technology to provide training for students studying on an Air Cabin Crew Course and also with Herefordshire Council to provide vehicle safety training. We have also advertised new courses in First Aid and Manual Handling and have already received a number of bookings.

Summary of Courses : 01.01.05 – 31.03.05

Operational Courses	110	763	Training Days
Commercial Courses	19	171	Students Trained
Meetings & Seminars	42	474	Attendees

Response and Intervention Update

Environment Agency Local Area Agreement

43. The Service has recently signed a Local Area Agreement with the Environment Agency that will lead to a greater understanding and synergy at operational incidents when working together. The Agreement formalises the respective roles and expectations of those attending incidents that pose a threat to the environment and ensures safe working practices are implemented at a very early stage. It contains information sharing expectations, roles and responsibilities, anticipated attendance times and contact details as well as charging mechanisms and protocols for instances where environmental protection is required beyond a Fire Service emergency incident.
44. The Environment Agency has previously supplied two Environmental Protection Units, based at Stourport-on-Severn and Evesham, and environmental Grab Packs for all front line appliances to prevent or mitigate the environmental impact of many incident types. This Local Area Agreement further cements the positive and proactive relationship that exists between the Service and the Environment Agency.

Work at Height

45. As part of a project within the Service Integrated Risk Management Plan and to enable legislative compliance with the Work at Height Regulations 2005, equipment, training and safe systems of work are now being implemented across the Service to further safeguard operational personnel at incidents. The equipment and systems of work that have been developed to prevent or mitigate falls from height is a major step forward for Firefighter safety and represents a significant action to reduce organisational risk. The equipment to enable safety procedures is of the highest quality and simple in operation. Despite this, to train all operational personnel across the Service is a significant task that will take a considerable time. It is envisaged that training will be completed by December 2005.

False Alarms

46. The Service continues to experience rising numbers of False Alarms from Automatic Fire Detection equipment in particular. A system to reduce the number of such false alarms has now been implemented. Closely following a policy developed by the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Service has now notified over 1,200 premises that returned false alarms between April and December 2004 of the intention and methodology we intend to adopt.

47. In the first instance the Service will be targeting those premises that returned larger numbers of false alarms within the nine-month period used for initial action. Some of these premises returned over thirty false alarms within the period. Just 127 premises returned 46% of all calls returned to the Service within the period used for initial action.
48. Reduction in the number of false alarms benefits not only the Service, where it enables response to emergency incidents, reduces costs, reduces risk to operational personnel and reduces disruption to other activities, but also benefits premise owners/occupiers. False alarms disrupt business and process within the commercial sector and regular actuation leads to complacency by occupants that would be dangerous in the event of an actual fire.
49. The level of attendance provided to premises may be reduced if repeated false alarms are reported. Each premise will be individually monitored; the Service will provide guidance and advice where necessary and attendance levels will only be reduced following a risk assessment and appropriate notification to premise owners/occupiers.
50. The success of the adopted policy relies on adherence to British Standards by premise owners/occupiers for alarm system installation, maintenance and management. Each premise with a remotely monitored fire alarm system within the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire will eventually be required to have a unique reference number, supplied by the Service, that is key to appropriate monitoring and administration.

Letters of Appreciation and Complaints

51. In the period January to March 2005, 60 letters of appreciation were received and 8 FSNBF donations with letters of thanks. 1 concern was expressed and 6 complaints were received (none in relation to the level of service).
52. I will arrange for all letters to be made available for Members' perusal at the meeting.

Background Papers

None

Incident Statistics – Comparative Data 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005

District	Station	2003-04			2004/05		
		Total Fires April 2003 to March 2004	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents April 2003 to March 2004	Total False Alarms April 2003 to March 2004	Total Fires April 2004 to March 2005	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents April 2004 to March 2005	Total False Alarms April 2004 to March 2005
South	21 Worcester	850	320	901	493	374	829
	26 Droitwich	173	110	284	161	129	250
	28 Evesham	184	74	219	129	63	208
	29 Pebworth	17	3	6	17	8	10
	30 Broadway	19	6	34	15	14	35
	31 Pershore	108	27	84	67	36	78
	32 Upton	62	43	54	32	30	50
	41 Malvern	232	74	257	146	75	201
	53 Tenbury Wells	37	21	23	21	25	14
	District Total	1682	678	1862	1081	754	1675
North	22 Stourport	263	56	169	213	60	134
	23 Bewdley	112	37	38	61	36	30
	24 Kidderminster	557	222	501	367	197	468
	25 Bromsgrove	462	177	376	296	161	347
	27 Redditch	934	221	552	619	245	587
	District Total	2328	713	1636	1556	699	1566
West	42 Ledbury	68	33	83	49	39	79
	43 Fownhope	16	11	48	7	8	42
	44 Ross on Wye	60	39	76	44	35	67
	45 Whitchurch	22	31	9	24	15	11
	46 Hereford	397	159	405	340	166	374
	47 Ewyas Harold	21	7	5	19	4	5
	48 Eardisley	26	16	8	14	4	12
	49 Kington	13	7	5	5	9	3
	50 Leintwardine	10	2	6	12	10	7
	51 Kingsland	24	11	14	25	19	14
	52 Leominster	83	44	59	67	65	76
	54 Bromyard	49	24	34	41	51	31
	55 Peterchurch	35	3	13	25	5	13
	District Total	824	387	765	672	430	734
	Grand Total	4834	1778	4263	3309	1883	3975

Fire Statistics 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005

District	Station	Primary Fires (FDR1)	Secondary Fires (FDR3)	Chimney Fires	Total Fires	Rescues at Fires	Casualties at Fires	Fatalities at Fires
South	21 Worcester	241	242	10	493	3	24	3
	26 Droitwich	86	67	8	161	0	2	0
	28 Evesham	68	55	6	129	0	1	0
	29 Pebworth	5	6	6	17	0	0	0
	30 Broadway	6	7	2	15	0	0	0
	31 Pershore	30	33	4	67	0	3	0
	32 Upton	22	9	1	32	0	1	0
	41 Malvern	72	70	4	146	0	5	0
	53 Tenbury	7	7	7	21	1	0	0
District Total		537	496	48	1081	4	36	3
North	22 Stourport	73	134	6	213	0	3	0
	23 Bewdley	19	38	4	61	0	0	0
	24 Kidderminster	148	214	5	367	2	9	0
	25 Bromsgrove	150	131	15	296	3	2	1
	27 Redditch	280	333	6	619	3	14	1
District Total		670	850	36	1556	8	28	2
West	42 Ledbury	25	19	5	49	0	0	0
	43 Fownhope	3	3	1	7	0	0	0
	44 Ross on Wye	21	12	11	44	0	1	0
	45 Whitchurch	16	2	6	24	0	0	0
	46 Hereford	141	184	15	340	0	15	0
	47 Ewyas Harold	8	2	9	19	0	0	0
	48 Eardisley	8	3	3	14	0	0	0
	49 Kington	4	0	1	5	0	0	0
	50 Leintwardine	2	3	7	12	0	0	0
	51 Kingsland	10	3	12	25	0	0	0
	52 Leominster	36	20	11	67	0	1	0
	54 Bromyard	14	15	12	41	6	4	2
	55 Peterchurch	10	5	10	25	0	0	0
District Total		298	271	103	672	6	21	2
GRAND TOTAL		1505	1617	187	3309	18	85	7

Special Service Incident Statistics 1 April 2004 to 31 Mar 2005

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	370	4	374	45	39	2
	26 Droitwich	129	0	129	15	0	2
	28 Evesham	63	0	63	2	8	1
	29 Pebworth	8	0	8	0	1	1
	30 Broadway	14	0	14	1	5	0
	31 Pershore	36	0	36	6	18	0
	32 Upton	30	0	30	1	18	0
	41 Malvern	75	0	75	5	9	2
	53 Tenbury	25	0	25	1	12	1
	District Total	750	4	754	76	110	9
North	22 Stourport	60	0	60	5	24	1
	23 Bewdley	35	1	36	0	3	1
	24 Kidderminster	196	1	197	77	33	3
	25 Bromsgrove	160	1	161	11	54	1
	27 Redditch	242	3	245	9	8	2
	District Total	693	6	699	102	122	8
West	42 Ledbury	39	0	39	2	27	0
	43 Fownhope	8	0	8	0	1	0
	44 Ross on Wye	35	0	35	0	29	0
	45 Whitchurch	15	0	15	0	17	0
	46 Hereford	163	3	166	19	44	2
	47 Ewyas Harold	4	0	4	1	4	0
	48 Eardisley	4	0	4	0	5	0
	49 Kington	9	0	9	0	5	0
	50 Leintwardine	10	0	10	1	5	0
	51 Kingsland	19	0	19	1	9	0
	52 Leominster	65	0	65	8	33	0
	54 Bromyard	51	0	51	8	18	1
	55 Peterchurch	5	0	5	0	0	0
	District Total	427	3	430	40	197	3
	GRAND TOTAL	1870	13	1883	218	429	20

Special Service Incident Statistics 1 April 2004 to 31 Mar 2005

District	Station	False Alarm Malicious	False Alarm Good Intent	False Alarm Apparatus	Total False Alarms
South	21 Worcester	50	153	626	829
	26 Droitwich	9	50	191	250
	28 Evesham	6	35	167	208
	29 Pebworth	3	5	2	10
	30 Broadway	1	6	28	35
	31 Pershore	4	7	67	78
	32 Upton	0	26	24	50
	41 Malvern	6	59	136	201
	53 Tenbury	0	6	8	14
	District Total	79	347	1249	1675
North	22 Stourport	10	35	89	134
	23 Bewdley	0	13	17	30
	24 Kidderminster	38	86	344	468
	25 Bromsgrove	12	79	256	347
	27 Redditch	34	145	408	587
	District Total	94	358	1114	1566
West	42 Ledbury	1	5	73	79
	43 Fownhope	0	5	37	42
	44 Ross on Wye	0	27	40	67
	45 Whitchurch	1	8	2	11
	46 Hereford	18	90	266	374
	47 Ewyas Harold	0	1	4	5
	48 Eardisley	0	3	9	12
	49 Kington	0	1	2	3
	50 Leintwardine	0	5	2	7
	51 Kingsland	0	6	8	14
	52 Leominster	4	22	50	76
	54 Bromyard	2	5	24	31
	55 Peterchurch	1	4	8	13
	District Total	27	182	525	734
	GRAND TOTAL	200	887	2888	3975

**Fire Safety Inspections April 2004-
March 2005** **Total**

Full inspections	73
Re-inspections	778
Plan inspections	281
Follow-up inspections	437
Specific inspections	3325
Building Regulations Plans/Consultations	1191

10. COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Purpose of report

1. To inform Members of Service activities in the last quarter together with Education and Prevention details.
-

Local Public Service Agreements (Round 1)

2. The Authority has now completed its LPSA 1 agreements with Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council (which had a three-year life cycle to March 2005) and has achieved performance well in excess of the 25% stretch targets required in relation to reductions in accidental dwelling fires and resultant injuries and deaths. Overall our performance has made significant impact upon the safety of the community through our frontline prevention initiatives such as Home Fire Safety Checks and the Schools Education Programme. The details of our outturn performance are given overleaf and reflect the significant benefit that proactive and targeted Fire and Rescue Service prevention campaigns can deliver towards Community Safety.
3. Specifically our performance over the period signifies nearly 700 less households in the two Counties have suffered the trauma of fire and many less people have been injured. The reduction in accidental house fires has also saved on average about £5m to the local economy based on the latest Government analysis of fire costs (*"The Economic Cost of Fire: March 2005"*).
4. A number of the proactive education and prevention campaigns established under the Local Public Service Agreements have been incorporated into our mainstream ongoing service delivery as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan. This includes retention of specialist staff who deliver specific initiatives such as community development and rural schools education.
5. Through the LPSAs a total of 4,634 free home fire safety checks have been carried out and 5,805 smoke alarms and replacement batteries fitted in dwellings across the two Counties. Over 32,500 schoolchildren have taken part in fire safety programmes as part of the National Curriculum key stages 1 to 3, gaining skills for life in relation to safety. Additionally a number of other critical safety initiatives have also been established such as provision of smoke alarms for people with a hearing impairment.

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Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance 99/00	LPSA stretch target (final year)	Final Year performance 04/05
BV 142 iii - Number of accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings	21.2 (equating to 624 fires)	15 (449)	13.04 (equating to 394 fires)
BV 143 i/ii – Number of deaths and injuries combined from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	9.45 (equating to 67 injuries/deaths)	6.95 (49)	5.12 (equating to 39 injuries/deaths)

BV 142 iii Calculation: Number of accidental dwelling fires ÷ Dwellings* x 10 000

BV 143 i/ii Calculation: Number of accidental fire injuries & deaths ÷ Population* x 100 000

*Dwellings and population figures expressed from CIPFA Fire Service statistics 2003

Home Fire Safety Checks completed between 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2005

Number of visits	Recorded Hours on HFSCs	Smoke alarms fitted	Replacement batteries fitted to existing smoke alarms
2178	2405	2883	354

School Visits from 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2005

	KS1	KS2	KS3	TOTALS
Watches	166	150	8	324
Audience	5227	4468	293	9988
Education Assistants	107	88	106	301
Audience	3796	3054	6559	13409

Education Activity

6. The new Key Stage 3 programme has now been delivered into 106 Secondary School classes across the two counties reaching over 6000 hitherto unreached Year 8 pupils. Teachers and pupils from both counties have responded extremely well to the programme and demand continues to be high with appointments booked to the end of the year. The programme has been recognised by Chartermark as National Best Practice and will be evaluated following its first year of input.

7. The Youth Strategy will deliver a range of groundbreaking activities and opportunities for partnership working. A number of new programmes have now been

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piloted in key areas, such as the Juvenile Firesetters Awareness Group (JAG) project in Redditch, and are being further developed.

8. A new 'After School Club' programme, 'Hot Squad' has been delivered into 3 target schools in line with Government plans to extend the school day (Out of School Hours Learning). This has been an extremely successful multi safety, multi agency initiative and an excellent opportunity to work with partner agencies. Pupils have taken on board a wide range of safety information in a fun and informative way and schools have been delighted to support us in any way by providing displays in the foyer and sending information to parents. Headteachers, parents and pupils have responded very positively to the programme and we hope to build upon this success and the partnerships by extending provision in the future.
9. The 'Juvenile Firesetters Awareness Group' (JAG Project) has extended provision to Kidderminster Fire Station following requests from Social Services Family Support Unit in Kidderminster. All of the young people involved had demonstrated firesetting behaviour and attended every session of the 4 week course. Excellent feedback has been received from Social Services delighted with the programme and again, demand is high in all areas.
10. In support of Child Safety Week (June 20-26) a new initiative has been developed to raise our profile during the week and provide a reminder of our key messages to pupils and parents. Each Station has been asked to identify 5 of its target schools to be contacted by the Fire Safety department. The duty crew will then attend at the end of the school day and give out leaflets and reminders to parents, teachers and pupils. Schools have been reminded to be mindful of any congestion/road safety issues at the end of the school day and the Road Safety Team have been invited to participate by adding their input into assemblies that week, affording another partnership initiative.
11. We are leading strategically on a major road safety partnership initiative called 'Dying to Drive'. This programme is designed to highlight a range of road safety issues in a hard hitting format in which Year 8 pupils listen to the build up of an RTC and then watch a set up in which teenage passengers need to be extricated from a car. The crash is then followed by a series of workshops in which each of the agencies put across their specific message. A substantial amount of research has been undertaken in order to best inform our provision in this area and a steering group has now been established by ourselves including key representatives from West Mercia Police, Youth Offending Team (YOT), Ambulance Service and the Road Safety Team at Worcestershire County Council.
12. Following a meeting with the Board at University College Worcester regarding the high level of calls received by us from there, a number of initiatives have now been put in place to reduce that number in the future. We will be raising our profile during Freshers week and students will receive fire safety literature and instructions prior to their arrival. The College have agreed to inflict harsh penalties on any offenders and to ensure that kitchen doors are closed and cooking in the early hours of the morning is limited. We will be monitoring the results of this input carefully.
13. A substantial amount of research is currently being undertaken with a view to introducing a Fire Safety Programme into Special Needs Schools. We have visited a wide range of pupils and shadowed classes who experience a range of problems. We

have also trialed a number of resources and provided fire safety input to autistic children and those with emotional and behavioural problems. We are now in a position to begin working on the programme with a view to launch in September this year. In doing so we are working in partnership with West Midlands FRS and Somerset FRS.

14. A key target group in terms of young people are those attending Pupil Referral Units as they have been excluded from mainstream school and often have a range of associated problems and behaviours. Having recognised this we have increased our input into PRUs and following a very successful session in Redditch, invited the pupils to Redditch Fire Station to work with ourselves and the watch. This event was extremely well received and provision will now be extended to all referral units.
15. We have begun to work with the Princes Trust by providing a Community Project for their new team in Redditch. The team programme is designed to give young people from vulnerable backgrounds a fresh start and an opportunity to achieve something positive. We are keen to work closely with this area of the Community and have agreed to allow the young people to begin work on the BA Pod currently used for Crucial Crew events. The team will source funding and resources before beginning work and then visit the pod in action and work with Bromsgrove pupils at the May event. This is an excellent opportunity for us to reach the wider community and to begin partnership with the Princes Trust.
16. In meeting our objectives for extending our input into all areas and reaching young people outside the mainstream arena, a new project has been designed to benefit young people in the Charford and Sidemoor areas of Bromsgrove. Both these estates suffer from a range of linked social problems and provide a focus for projects relating to social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. We will be delivering a series of arson, hoax calls and road safety sessions to young people attending various youth clubs in the evenings. The intention is that they then agree to keep their community safe by reporting any suspicious calls or fires. It is hoped that this project will affect the wider community as it will be teamed with a series of meetings to other groups. The young people will be rewarded at the end of the summer should our figures show a decline in those areas.

Fire Protection

Building Control Consultation

17. Specialist Fire Safety Officers recently attended a joint meeting with Building Control Officers representing the Local Authority Departments. This enabled Officers to explore mutual areas of working practices at both a practical and technical level. This also resulted in a greater degree of working knowledge between the two sectors to the benefit of both parties and to the consulting professional bodies.
18. The Fire Safety technical guidance documents used by the Officers are currently being reviewed and our officers will play a role in the consultation process. The Procedural Guidance issued by ODPM, which formalises the consultation process between Building Control Officers and Fire Safety Officers, is due to be amended during the coming months. This may well impact on the way that consultation between the two parties in the future is carried out and to what level of response and responsibility for specific fire safety measures are appropriate.

Sprinklers

19. A local Fire Sprinkler Company recently gave a technical and practical input on the benefits of Domestic and Residential Fire Sprinklers. This was clearly demonstrated by the use of a purpose built display vehicle sponsored by the Fire Sprinkler Association.
20. Officers have been seeking sponsorship with members of the Fire Sprinkler industry in order to progress the provision of a suitable sprinkler system at the new Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters and an agreement has been reached with Wormald Fire Systems. This will enable the system to be installed during the refurbishment and will reflect the continued commitment by HWFRS to the promotion of such systems as a benefit to reducing fire loses in our community. It has been agreed that Wormald Fire Systems will also undertake presentations, seminars, support our events and provide specialist knowledge and training to our personnel in a bid to raise the general awareness in this area of fire protection.
21. A joint meeting has been held with Officers from Herefordshire Education Department on the issue of sprinklers in schools. It has been agreed that we will liaise with them on any new school project. To this end we will pilot our joint working practices at the proposed new school at Sutton St Nicholas.

Licensing Act 2003

22. The new conditions of this Act came into force on 7 February; this allows a 6-month window in which to transfer from the existing Licence system to this new Licensing procedure. At present very few premises have taken advantage of this and Fire Safety Officers expect a high demand during the final months of this transfer window. Officers have been attending various combined agency meetings across the service area to assist with the raising of awareness amongst those affected in the Licensing trade.

Arson Prevention

23. All twenty-six wholtime watches have now received training in Arson Prevention Advice. Community Fire Safety staff whose work takes them out into the community have also received the training and selected Retained Units are being prioritised as part of the programme to reduce deliberate fires.
24. The LPSA 2 bid aimed at improving the quality of life of people living in identified areas in Worcestershire by reducing crime and arson fires is well advanced with the initial proposal for targets and measures being sent to the ODPM. The viability of a similar LPSA 2 bid for Herefordshire is being considered.
25. Following a series of barn and farm fires in the South Worcestershire area the HWFRS worked closely with the Police by providing information and intelligence. This has resulted in three people being charged with arson and other offences who are due in court in the near future. In a second case the observations and proactive work of fire crews attending a series of fires in the Diglis area of Worcester has resulted in an individual being committed to Crown Court at the end of June. Some of the fires started involved lorries parked overnight with the drivers asleep inside.

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26. The Station Manager Community Fire Safety leading on Arson Reduction and Fire Investigation has become the single point of contact for the HWFRS in relation to PPO (Prolific and Other Priority Offenders) and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). Although the proportion of arsonists falling under the supervision of the schemes is relatively small compared to other offenders the HWFRS can add value to the work of these groups.

Eid (January 2005)

27. A NCFSC strategic campaign was launched in Nottinghamshire to raise fire safety awareness to the Muslim community during one of their main religious festivals. Marketing support was provided in the form of banners and audio-visual display materials.

National Chip Week (February 2005)

28. The Service supported National Chip Week with the issue of a press release and local activity by Stations.

National No Smoking Day (March 2005)

29. This year the Service was able to provide an improved level of partnership activity to both PCTs in our region. A number of suitable public locations such as doctors surgeries and licensed premises were identified, and provided with materials such as posters and beer mats which carried important local and national safety messages highlighting the significantly increased fire risk in the homes of smokers.

Ideal Home Exhibition, London (April 2005)

30. The National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC) identified HWFRS as having a high level of Community Fire Safety major public event success and experience. The Service was invited to provide staffing and support at the event. A wide variety of fire safety issues were discussed with members of the public from around the country, and written information, leaflets and interactive CD roms given out according to individual needs.

Inspire 2 Independence

31. Inspire (Training) Ltd are a training company who are working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The two week programme is aimed at 'Lone Parents' and includes topics such as Preparing for work, Childcare, budgeting and Domestic S.O.S. As part of the Domestic S.O.S sessions Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have been able to offer advice and support with regards to Fire Safety within the home environment and Home Fire Safety Check Scheme.
32. The two week programme has been running since January 2005 and will continue for the whole year. The sessions have already proven successful in the following areas:-
- Ross On Wye
 - Hereford
 - Leominster
 - Malvern

Background papers

None

11. 2005/06 FIRE AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE PLAN

Purpose of report

1. To seek approval of the Authority's Performance Plan for 2005/06.
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Background

2. The FRA is required by statute to produce and publish an annual Performance Plan. The Plan provides an overview of the Authority's strategic objectives and priorities for improvement and reflects the FRA's corporate planning process. (A copy of the draft Plan is being sent separately to Members of the Authority and is available to the public on request.)
3. It also includes the Service's achievements against targets for the 2004/2005 year and determines priorities and targets for 2005/2006 and subsequent years. The Plan must be published before 30 June 2005 to meet statutory publication requirements. Members were consulted through the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee meeting held on 8 April 2005.
4. It is also intended to inform 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 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and Her Majesty's Fire Services Inspectorate (HMFSI).

Performance Plan 2005-2006

5. 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.
6. The content of the Performance Plan reflects the outcomes from IRMP, CPA and the FRA Service Improvement workshops carried out last year.
7. In preparing Performance targets for 2005/06, account has been taken of the guidance published by the 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 and Local Indicators to measure performance in priority areas. All targets will be set locally, taking into account national priorities and in particular Local Public Service Agreements reached in partnership with the Constituent Authorities.
8. Progress in delivering the Authority's Performance Plan is reported to Members through the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee and meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

9. Following approval by the FRA, the Performance Plan will be circulated and also available via the FRS website (www.hwfire.org.uk) and the internal intranet.

Performance Plan Summary

10. The Government requires the FRA to provide a summary of the FRS performance achievements using estimated non-audited data at the same time as the public are receiving Council Tax information.
11. The FRA achieved this objective by providing performance information within the Precepting Leaflet, by publishing a Performance Plan Summary on the FRS's website and by circulating a summary leaflet to key stakeholders.
12. The Performance Plan Summary Leaflet can be viewed by visiting the FRS website at www.hwfire.org.uk.

Performance Plan Poster

13. A Performance Plan Poster is prepared each year to highlight the FRA's strategic objectives and priorities and acts as a blue print for the production of District, Station and Watch Performance folders and departmental plans which detail how relevant Fire Stations and Departments will contribute to meeting the Authority's objectives and targets. The production of the poster has been completed and issued to Fire Stations and Departments.
14. Individual Personal Development Reviews also take account of the content of the Performance Plan Poster.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the Performance Plan s for 2005/06 be adopted.

Background Papers

None

12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report

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

2. This report summarises the work of the Standards Committee for the period April 2004 to March 2005.
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. 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.)
5. The Membership during the reporting period comprised the 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 two Members of the Authority: Brigadier Peter Jones CBE and Mr Philip Mould.
6. 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.
7. In 2004/2005 this has necessitated the Committee meeting once, that meeting taking place on 11 March, 2005. The Committee considered the matters set out below.

Committee On Standards In Public Life 10th Report: "Getting The Balance Right: Implementing Standards Of Conduct In Public Life"

8. 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.
9. The Committee has given particular consideration to two of the recommendations: one proposing the amendment of legislation to require Standards Committees to report annually to the Standards Board and the Authority on the operation of the ethical framework; and another proposing that legislation should be introduced

requiring Standards Committees to have a majority of Independent Members and an Independent Chair.

10. The Standards Committee agreed that an annual report be prepared for submission to the Authority each June and submitted to the Standards Board if required. (This report gives effect to that decision.)
11. The Committee concluded that there would be merit, irrespective of whether or not legislation was to be forthcoming, in recommending the Authority to make arrangements to appoint up to two additional Independent Members. (This recommendation is discussed in the separate report on this agenda by the Clerk relating to the allocation of seats to Committees.)
12. The Committee has agreed that one of the Independent Members should take the chair and that the office should alternate annually between them, the other Independent Member being appointed Vice-Chair. The Committee has suggested that the Authority formally confirms the view that Independent Members should hold office as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee as its policy, with the Chair alternating each year between a Herefordshire based Independent Member and a Worcestershire based Independent Member. (This recommendation is also discussed in the separate report on this agenda by the Clerk relating to the allocation of seats to Committees.)

National Review Of The Code Of Conduct For Members

13. The Code of Conduct for Local Government, to which all Members of the Authority are required to adhere, was introduced three years ago and the legislative framework is now in place including local hearings and local investigations.
14. The Standards Board for England has recently conducted a review of the content of the Code by the Minister of State for Local and Regional Government. The Board state that they “*aim 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.*”
15. The Committee has submitted a response on behalf of the Authority to the Standards Board for England’s consultation exercise which concludes on 17 June, 2005. A copy of the Committee’s response is available on request.

Code of Corporate Governance

16. The 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. The Code of Corporate Governance is a means of putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Authority’s affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

17. The Committee has noted the position in relation to those requirements placed upon the Authority by the Code of Corporate Governance which the Committee was responsible for monitoring. These include requirements:
- to put in place clearly documented protocols governing relationships between Members and Officers.
 - to ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of Members and senior officers are clearly defined.
 - to 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.
 - to 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.
 - to 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.
 - to 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.
 - to 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.
 - to put in place arrangements for Whistleblowing to which staff and all those contracting with the Council have access.

Code on Confidential Reporting

18. The Code of Corporate Governance recognises the need for policies and procedures which enable employees to voice concerns they may have about any aspect of the organisation's work, particularly if they appear to point to serious malpractice.
19. The Committee has noted the revised Service Policy and Instruction on confidential reporting which provides Members, employees and others acting on the Authority's behalf with the means to raise any concerns confidentially, without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

Members' Development Programme

20. The Code of Corporate Governance also recognises the need for the Authority to 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.

21. The Committee noted the 2004/05 Members' development programme and pointed out the need to include appropriate training on conduct matters as part of the induction training planned for new Members after the elections in Worcestershire.
22. It has also noted that Herefordshire Council has held two formal hearings on alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by Town or Parish Councillors. It has suggested that other Members of the Standards Committee should be given the opportunity to attend any future hearing, as observers, to gain experience of the procedure.

Recommendation

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

Background Papers

None

13. PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2004/05

Purpose of report

1. To provide information on Revenue and Capital outturn for 2004/05 and final details of re-billing costs.
-

Introduction

2. It is normal that the outturn would be reported to the Audit and Budget Committee. However, as the Authority meets a month earlier, the opportunity has been taken to bring the report to Members at the earliest opportunity.
3. Detailed monitoring reports have been presented to the Audit and Budget Committee throughout the year on a regular basis.

Revenue Budget

4. In July, at the instruction of the Deputy Prime Minister, the FRA reset the budget requirement at £25.798m comprising of £25.250m expenditure and £0.548m to create balances.
5. Monitoring Reports presented to the Audit & Budget Committee throughout the year have projected an out-turn figure of +/- £0.020m, with variances on individual budget heads. The budget paper presented to the FRA on 16 February reported an underspend of £0.089m, the additional amount arising from a saving in the projected costs of re-billing. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the FRA determined to take a further £0.080m to general balances.
6. Subject to final confirmation and external audit, an actual outturn of £25.163m is anticipated. This represents an underspending of £0.087m.
7. The details of the variation are shown below:-

	£m
	Over/(under) spend
• Wholtime Pay – faster turnover to revised establishment*	(0.354)
• RDS Pay – cost of Pay Award*	0.205
• Pensions – Transfer Values and Lump Sums	0.455
• Unbudgeted Grants	(0.086)
• Capital Financing (Leasing and Investment Income)	(0.205)
• Rebilling Costs	(0.085)
• Net other	<u>(0.017)</u>
	<u>(0.087)</u>

**Reflected in 2005/06 Budget*

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8. For Final Accounts purposes, some of the expenditure may be included in ear-marked reserves. These will be used to meet the specific commitments and would not be available for other purposes.
9. The £0.087m underspend will be carried to general balances in accordance with the decision taken at the FRA on 16 February 2005.

Re-Billing Costs

10. Invoices have been received, and paid, from all Authorities as below:-

	Total Cost	Cost per Dwelling*
	£	£
Bromsgrove	70,714	1.91
Herefordshire	32,411	0.84
Malvern Hills	49,084	1.54
Redditch	47,638	1.43
Worcester	63,135	1.55
Wychavon	45,479	0.92
Wyre Forest	51,651	1.22
	360,111	
New Tax Leaflets	5,186	
	365,297	

**Dwellings on valuation list 2004/05 Source: CIPFA/IPF*

11. Detailed breakdowns of the build-up of costs were provided and examined in detail for reasonableness. The lower costs from Herefordshire are explained by the fact that the Authority was also capped and costs were shared equally.

Capital Budget

12. As a result of Capping the proposed 2004/05 Capital Budget was deferred. There were, however, 2 committed schemes (VMDS and Ewyas Harold FS) which were carried forward as slippage from 2003/04 with associated financing.
13. At the FRA meeting in Sept 2004 it was agreed to vire some of the Ewyas Harold FS funding to urgent Interim works at Broadway FS, as the Eywas Harold scheme could not be completed within 2004/05.
14. Subsequently the Urgent Decisions Committee approved an amended HQ scheme which involved expenditure in 2004/05 to be funded by capital receipts.
15. In addition the works necessary to accommodate the IRU at Hereford Fire Station, funded by a specific grant from ODPM, have been added to the programme as they qualify as capital expenditure.

16. Expenditure against this Revised Budget is as below:-

	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Over (Under) £'000
HQ Project	1275	624	(651)
Broadway Fire Station	40	39	(1)
VMDS	65	37	(28)
Hereford Fire Station	44	44	-
ODPM Grant	(44)	(44)	-
	1380	700	(680)

17. The underspending on the HQ project is as a result of a revision to the cash flow arising from the detailed project plan now completed.
18. The underspending on VMDS related to a delay in paying the final invoice as Communications work was not completed by 31 March.

Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends:

- (a) **that the transfer of the underspend to general balances as referred to in paragraph 9 of the report be confirmed; and**
- (b) **that the increase in 2005/06 Capital Budgets arising from expenditure slippage in 2004/05 as set out in paragraph 16 of the report be approved.**

Background papers

None

14. FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS AND PARENTAL LEAVE

Purpose of report

1. To consider a policy on permitting buy-back of pension service.
-

Background

2. The recent Amendments to the Fireman's Pension Scheme, reported to the Authority on 27 September 2004, brought the scheme into line with new laws in relation to Paternity, Maternity and Adoption Leave.
3. However, although Parental Leave is an element of government policy, and was adopted by the Authority on 16 June 2003, it was not covered by the Amendments.
4. The Authority is asked to consider whether it wishes to make a local determination on the issue.
5. The current Regulations allow the Authority to agree to the buy-back of any period of unpaid (or reduced pay) leave. At present an employee taking Parental Leave would have to apply to the Authority on an individual basis for such approval. The Authority does not have to grant it.
6. The Authority may wish to streamline the process and agree that Parental Leave be treated in exactly the same way as Paternity, Maternity and Adoption Leave are covered in the present Regulations.
7. In either case employees would make a contribution equal to that they would have made had they received pay for the period.
8. The financial implications are small and favourable. The additional contributions would be equal to the amounts due if the employee had been paid normally.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to:

- (a) approve the adoption of a local policy to permit the Chief Fire Officer to approve requests for Pension service buy-back in respect of Parental Leave;**
- (b) approve that the arrangements be consistent with the treatment of Paternity leave under the present Pensions Regulations; and**
- (c) approve that the arrangements cease, and are reviewed, should the Regulations be further amended in respect of Parental Leave.**

Background papers

None

15. CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT 2004

Purpose of report

1. To inform Members of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and progress within the Service to enable compliance.

Introduction

2. Following the fuel crisis and the severe flooding in Autumn/Winter 2000, the Deputy Prime Minister announced a review of emergency planning arrangements. The review concluded that existing legislation no longer provided an adequate framework for modern civil protection efforts and that new legislation was needed.
3. A draft Bill was subsequently circulated for consultation. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 7 January 2004 and received Royal Assent on 18 November 2004.

Overview of the Act

5. The Act will deliver a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom to meet the challenges of the 21st century and is in two parts: local arrangements for civil protection (Part 1) and emergency powers (Part 2). The overall objective is to modernise outdated legislation. Key to this is an updating of the definition of what constitutes an “emergency”.

Definition of Emergency

6. 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; or
 - war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.

Part 1: Local Arrangements for Civil Protection

7. Part 1 of the Act establishes a new statutory framework for civil protection at the local level. This sets out clear expectations and responsibilities for front line (Category 1) responders at the local level to ensure that they are prepared to deal effectively with the full range of emergencies.
8. Those to be covered by the duties at present are:

Local Authorities	Emergency Services	NHS Bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All principal local authorities• Government agencies• Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police Forces• British Transport Police• Police Service of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary Care Trusts• Health Protection Agency• NHS Acute Trusts

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Environment Protection Agency • Maritime and Coastguard Agency 	<p>Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Rescue Authorities • Ambulance Services 	<p>(Hospitals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Trusts • Local Health Boards (in Wales) • Any Welsh NHS Trust which provides public health services • Health Boards (in Scotland) • Port Health Authorities
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9. Those in Category 1 will have duties placed upon them 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; and
 - Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).
10. Category 2 organisations will be placed under the lesser duties of co-operating with these organisations and sharing relevant information. Those to be included at present are:

<p>Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity • Gas • Water and Sewerage • Public communications • Providers (landlines and mobiles) 	<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail • Train Operating Companies (Passenger and Freight) • Transport for London • London Underground • Airports • Harbours and Ports • Highways Agency 	<p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Executive • Health • The Common Services Agency (in Scotland)
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Part 2: Emergency Powers

11. Emergency Powers allow the making of special temporary legislation to deal with the most serious of emergencies.
12. The Queen will formally indicate that emergency powers are necessary as part of the Order in Council that makes the regulations themselves. For the first time a fallback option has been included to cover the possibility that emergency powers will be needed, where the Queen is unable to act. The Act, therefore, allows for a senior Minister or the Prime Minister to make the regulations in the unlikely event that Her Majesty is not able to do so.
13. For the first time it is possible to use emergency powers on a regional and/or devolved administration basis. This ensures any special temporary legislation will apply only in the part of the UK affected by the emergency, leaving those elsewhere unaffected.

Progress Against Compliance

14. Within Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service the following progress has been made to date:
 - Our Service Website now carries a link to the Government information on Preparing for Emergencies, accessed via the '*Emergency!! What should you do?*' link.
 - The Service Strategic Risk Register supports the need for a plan to approach Business Continuity Management within the Service.
 - The work for New Dimensions has resulted in the production of Site Specific Plans for all major risks within Herefordshire and Worcestershire, including rendezvous points and preferred locations for Mass Decontamination equipment if required.
 - The Business Continuity Management documentation, produced by the Service in support of the Single Inspection Process has been heralded as best practice guidance.
 - We have close working relationships with our fellow Category 1 responders through CERMIG. We also have close links with many Category 2 responders through our preventive and education work.
15. The Guidance and Regulations that support the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 have recently completed a consultation phase and were to be issued at the end of April. This has now been delayed by the General Election but they are now expected to be issued in July 2005. Further progress will be undertaken to ensure Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service complies with the Act when this guidance becomes available.

Background papers

None