

Agenda

Councillors

Herefordshire:

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

Worcestershire:

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

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of Interests (if any)

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

3. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority held on Friday 23 September 2005 (copy attached – pink pages).

4. 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.

5. Service Report (p.1-17)

To inform Members of Brigade activities in the last quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005.

6. Financial Matters (To follow)

To consider a report on financial matters.

7. Protocol on the use of Resources (p.18-21)

To consider recommending the adoption of a protocol to govern the use of resources by Members.

8. Application for Performance Improvement Programme (p.22-23)

To update Members on the successful application to participate in the “Real Improvement, Real Time” Performance Improvement Programme.

9. Fire Control Project Update (p.24-28)

To update Members on the FiRe Control Project.

10. Regional Management Board (p.29-30)

To note the proceedings of the Regional Management Board and endorse its actions.

Exclusion of Public and Press

In the opinion of the Clerk to the Authority, the meeting will not be, or is likely not to be, open to the public and press at the time the following item of business is considered, for the reason stated:-

11. Appointment of Additional Independent Members to the Standards Committee (p.31)

This item is likely to disclose information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder under, the Authority.

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

Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority
Friday 23 September, 2005 County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester
(10.30 am)

Minutes

Present

Herefordshire:

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

Worcestershire: Mr T J Bean, Mr MH Clarke, Mrs DE Dudley, Mr RJ Farmer, Mr A Fry, Mr A I Hardman, Mr PT Mills, Mr P A Mould, Mrs B Passingham, Mr CT Smith, Mr RM Udall (Chair), Mr J R Webb, Mr GC Yarranton.

Available Papers:

- A. The agenda paper and appendices referred to (previously circulated).
- B. The minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 13 June 2005 (previously circulated).
- C. The draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (previously circulated).

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

470. (Agenda item 1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr SJ Clee and DW Prodger.

471. (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.)

472. (Agenda item 3) Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June, 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

There were no questions from members of the Public.

474. (Agenda Item 5) Chief Fire Officer's Report

The Authority was informed of Brigade activity in the last quarter together with operational and statistical details.

The Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation highlighting key aspects of the report, drawing particular attention to the section on his first impressions of the organisation.

He informed the Authority that he had tried to meet as many members of staff as he could to discuss issues affecting the Service and gain a feel for the organisation.

His first impressions were that the Service had much to be proud of and was undertaking a number of cutting edge initiatives. Whilst challenges lay ahead foundation stones in place included great people, great frontline kit and the conclusion, supported by current statistics and public satisfaction levels, that a great service was being provided.

There did appear to be room for improvement, in terms of communication both within and without the service, in investment, managing people and change and modernising the organisation's culture.

He explained that these initial findings would now be analysed. Whilst it had already been possible to address some issues through efficiencies within existing budgets, other matters would be considered through the existing business planning processes.

In response to questions the Chief Fire Officer replied as follows:

- There were no proposals to change the way in which on duty pumps were released for training purposes.
- The operational statistics were subject to seasonal variation and activity was also affected by the pattern of community safety initiatives across the two counties and the national campaigns.
- Lessons learned from a recent evacuation of Birmingham City Centre following a bomb scare were being compiled into a report for consideration by the Regional Resilience Forum. Whilst contingency arrangements had been made, improved command and communication links had proved their worth should the Service need to deploy resources.

475. (Agenda item 6) Draft 2006 – 2009 Integrated Risk Management Plan

The Authority considered approving the Fire and Rescue Authority's draft 2006 – 2009 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and Annual Action Plan for consultation.

The detailed Plan had been circulated separately to Members of the Authority.

It was reported that the proposed IRMP was ambitious and progressive but was also achievable and affordable. It was considered that the proposals in the Plan would result in a more efficient use of resources and an improvement in community safety.

The main proposals set out in the Plan were outlined. Attention was drawn in particular to the proposals being made following the review of emergency cover provision including the relocation and redevelopment of fire stations.

It was noted that if approved there would be a 12 week consultation period with the outcome being reported to the Authority in February.

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

- In relation to the relocation of fire stations and their replacement it was requested that in proposing two sites for Worcester careful consideration be given to having one to the east of the City and one to the West. The point was acknowledged and it was noted that a number of options would need to be considered before making any firm proposals.
- Concern was expressed about the proposed relocation of Malvern fire station. It was emphasised that a station was needed to serve Malvern. A station on the western side of Worcester serving Malvern and West Worcester would not be sufficient.

In reply it was confirmed that the Plan recognised that it was important to retain a station to serve Malvern. It was, however, thought that it may be better to relocate the present station. A new location had not yet been identified. A suggestion that consideration be given to the possibility of co-locating with the Ambulance Service was noted.

- The proposal to alter crewing arrangements at Redditch and Kidderminster Fire Stations by crewing the second fire engines at these two stations with wholetime staff 12 hours a day, 7 days a week was discussed. It was reported that statistics showed operational activity in Redditch peaked between noon and midnight. However, this did not represent an attractive shift pattern and it was being proposed that the 12 hour shift should run from 7 am until 7 pm. This was subject to further consultation.
- It was requested that Wychavon District Council and private landowners be approached in seeking to identify a replacement site for Pebworth.
- It was confirmed that initial discussions had taken place with the Fire Brigades Union. It was thought that many of the proposals were supported but the Union was reserving its position at this stage.
- That the role of Members of the Authority in explaining the proposals to the public was recognised. Members would be informed of the consultation programme.

RESOLVED: that the Fire and Rescue Authority's draft 2006 – 2009 Integrated Risk Management Plan and Annual Action Plan be approved for consultation.

476. (Agenda item 7) Urban Search And Rescue

The Authority considered accepting a request from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to take receipt of an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Unit and authorising the Chief Fire Officer to progress arrangements.

The report stated that the national new Dimension Programme was providing the Fire and Rescue Service with a national capability to respond to major emergencies. The next stage of the programme was the development of a national Urban Search and Rescue capability. The Authority was one of 16 which had been approached to take provision of USAR facilities largely based upon its geographical location but also due to the Authority's perceived ability to deliver the service.

The Authority was informed of the staffing and financial arrangements associated with the project and the need to find a location for the USAR team.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that, following confirmation of the resources which would be provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, he did not consider that acceptance of the offer would have an adverse impact on the Service.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the request from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to take receipt of an Urban Search and Rescue Unit be accepted; and**
- (b) that the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to progress arrangements.**

477. (Agenda item 8) Regional Fire Controls

The Authority was informed of the Government's announcement that the Regional Fire Control for the West Midlands was to be located in Wolverhampton, with the expectation that a new Centre would be operational by 2008-09.

The report noted that this might not be favourable for many staff currently working in Worcester and that steps were being taken to look at how best to support them.

Government expectations were that the project would deliver an improved service at local level as well as when dealing with major or widespread incidents. As with any major project there were a number of risks and these were being addressed by a national project team.

However, the Chief Fire Officer advised that there were also a number of significant local risks for the Authority in the short to medium term: maintenance of existing control and communications provision; the continued ability to deliver locally determined and locally accountable services; the costs during the project phase in retaining key staff, supporting existing ageing systems, regional project work and the eventual contributions to the running costs of the regional control and the expected operating costs of the replacement radio system; and the implications for the Authority's medium to

long term planning in terms of service delivery, ICT provision, property and finance given that much of the detail of the fire control project was still awaited.

Work was being undertaken at local level to manage these risks, which were not unique to the Authority, and teams at local, regional and national level were working to ensure that the project was successful. It would be important to ensure that the Authority participated fully in the work of the Regional Management Board which would have a significant role in resolving many of the issues. Managing the risk would be complex and time consuming, posing a significant additional burden for the Authority. Regular reports would be made to the Authority.

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

- There was some discussion of the merits of the regional control project with some Members having severe reservations and others expressing the view that the new arrangements would work and would be more cost effective.
- That it was important that the regional control centre was managed jointly by the authorities it served rather than being managed by a lead authority and that this should be emphasised in discussions at Regional Management Board level.
- That given that the Government had made its decision the Authority should focus on managing the risks it faced at local level during the transitional period.
- The Chief Fire Officer commented that, having highlighted the risks to the Authority, he did not underestimate the challenge but believed the Authority did have robust project management arrangements in place.
- It was proposed that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister should be advised of the Authority's concern about the risks facing the Authority and its assistance sought in reducing them.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Fire Officer be authorised following consultation with the Chairman to write to the ODPM expressing concerns about the significant local risks which had been identified as facing the Authority and seeking the ODPM's constructive engagement in reducing these risks.

478. (Agenda item 9) Comprehensive Performance Assessment Results

The Authority received an update on the outcome of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) result.

The report noted that the Authority had been rated as a "good" Service and showed how favourably this performance compared both regionally and nationally. The Chief Fire Officer drew attention to where the Audit Commission had assessed that the Authority was doing well, and areas where there was room for improvement. It was noted that areas for improvement would be addressed through the Performance Plan.

Members welcomed this positive result and congratulated staff on the outcome.

479. (Agenda item 10) 2006/07 Grant Distribution

The Authority considered the Government's proposals on changes to the Formula Grant Distribution Mechanism.

In presenting the report the Treasurer drew attention to two recent developments: the Government's decision to postpone council tax revaluation and to extend the terms of reference of the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government funding to include the role and functions of local government; and the creation of strategic police authorities. He reported, however, that notwithstanding these developments and the additional uncertainty they created he understood that the Government intended to proceed with some changes to the grant formula.

The report outlined the issues set out in the consultation paper and the implications for the Authority. It was proposed that the Authority's response should consist of a letter on behalf of the Authority, as set out at appendix 3 to the report with a response on the technical detail of the consultation as set out in appendix 4 to the report.

RESOLVED: that the response to the consultation on the Formula Grant Distribution Mechanism, as set out in appendices 3 and 4 to the report, be approved.

480. (Agenda item 11) New Headquarters

The Authority was informed of progress on the New Headquarters project welcoming the news that it was on time and on budget.

481. (Agenda item 12) Community Safety/Local Public Service Agreements

The Authority was informed of service activities in the last quarter together with Education and Prevention details and progress on the development of a second Local Public Service Agreement.

It was noted that the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee had recommended that Members avail themselves of the free home fire safety check offered by the Service.

482. (Agenda item 13) Integrated Personnel Development System

The Authority noted progress on the implementation of the Integrated Personnel Development System (IPDS) in the Service.

The report stated that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment had found that progress in implementing IPDS had been maintained at a "good" level since the Stage 1 and Stage 2 audits. It set out work completed and work in progress.

483. (Agenda item 14) Standing Orders For The Conduct Of Business

The Authority reviewed the Standing Orders for the Conduct of Business.

It was reported that a review had been undertaken in line with the provisions in the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance. The Standing Orders were considered fit for purpose and the only modification proposed related to the reintroduction of the term "Chairman".

RESOLVED: that the Standing Orders for Business be revised to reflect the use of the term "Chairman".

The meeting ended at 12.26 pm.

Chairman.....

5. SERVICE REPORT

Purpose of Report

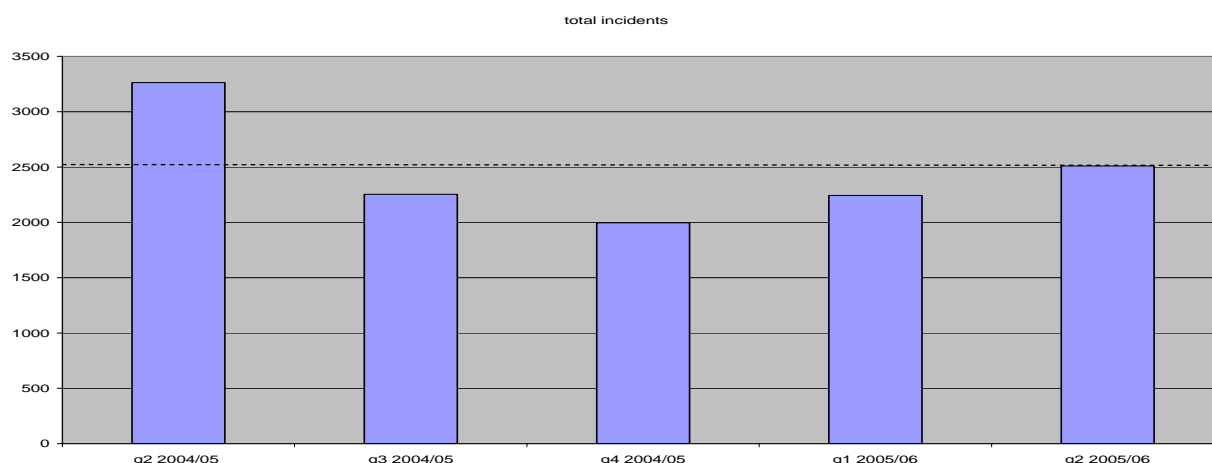
1. To inform Members of Service activities in the last quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005.
-

Performance

Operational Statistics

2. Members are requested to note the levels of operational activity experienced by the Service for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005.
3. In comparison with the same quarter last year, there is a welcome reduction in all fires and special service incidents but a slight increase in false alarms. Although the trend for the last three quarters appears to be rising in all categories, Members will be aware that the number of incidents is subject to significant seasonal variations. The Service will continue to monitor the number of incidents throughout the year.
4. As well as the summary tabulation below, a graphic has been included that demonstrates the profile of call statistics over the last five quarters. The Service will continue to operate its preventative strategies and will report of their impact over the year.

Quarter	All Fires	Special Service Incidents	All Fire Alarms	Total Incidents
Q2 2004/05	1686	511	1066	3263
Q3 2004/05	755	476	1022	2253
Q4 2004/05	721	385	891	1997
Q1 2005/06	827	462	954	2243
Q2 2005/06	922	477	1110	2509



5. For further information on Incident Statistics for 1 July – 30 September 2005 see Appendix 1.

Number of Home Fire Safety Checks from 1 July 2005 – 30 Sept 2005

Number of visits	Recorded Hours on HFSCs	Smoke alarms fitted	Replacement batteries fitted to existing smoke alarms
613	2148	816	105

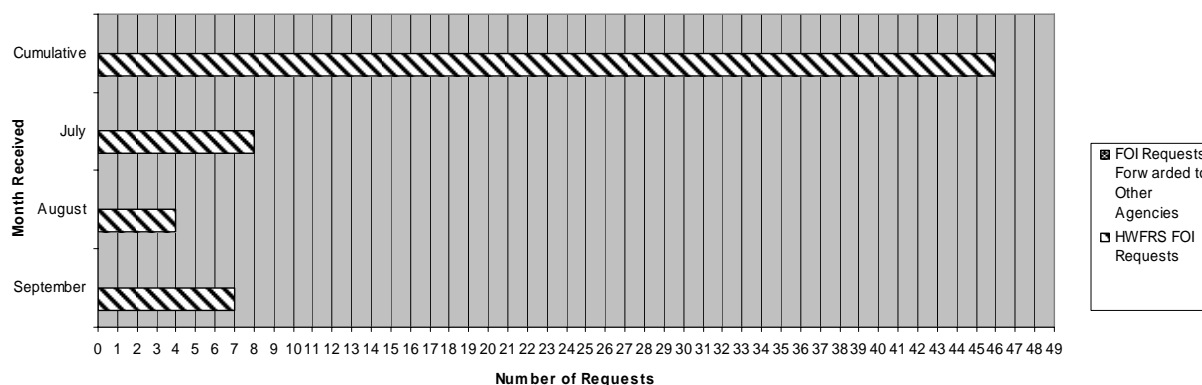
6. Following our success in implementing the ‘Home Fire Safety Check’ strategy currently being delivered across the two counties, the department is now in a position to target specific ‘at risk’ groups. In partnership with a range of other agencies, our intention is to identify key target groups including deaf, blindness, adults with learning difficulties and physical disability.
7. A successful electric blanket testing project has been delivered at Kidderminster Fire Station. The event was targeted towards the elderly and was attended by several partner agencies promoting their services with the aim of keeping warm and safe. A total of 141 blankets were tested over the three days of which 50% failed. Seventy homes are, therefore, now safer due to this initiative.

School Visits from 1 July 2005 – 30 Sept 2005

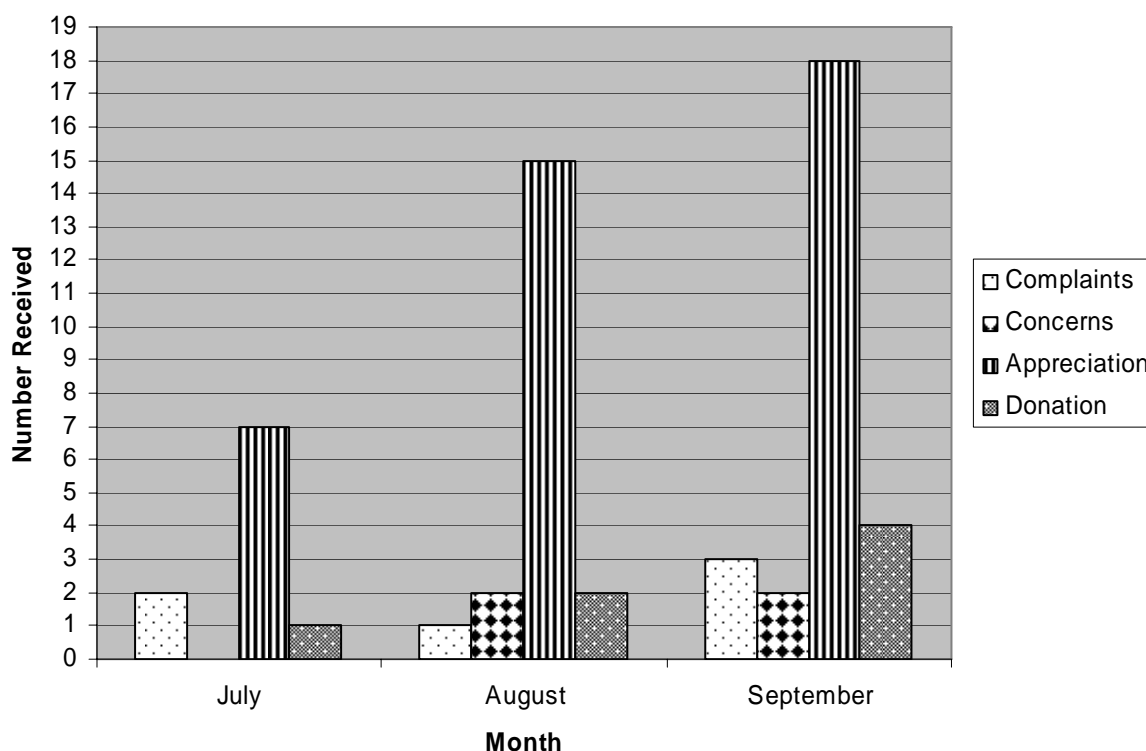
	KS1	KS2	KS3	TOTALS
Watches	8	6	0	14
Audience	315	585	0	900
Education Assistants	8	5	10	23
Audience	1004	515	3780	5299

Freedom of Information Requests

Freedom of Information Requests Received July - September 2005



Letters of Appreciation/Donation/Complaints/Concerns



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

Health and Safety

Accidents and Injuries

9. The accident rate for the second quarter shows a significant decrease compared with the preceding year's second quarter (19 compared to 26), with the number of RIDDOR reportable accidents being half the number of those encountered during the same period last year. This said there has been a slight increase in accident rate compared to the immediately preceding quarter (19 compared to 17) and an increase of one RIDDOR reportable accident - from 3 to 4 - on the previous quarter. This

represents an increase in the accident/RIDDOR percentage rate from 17% to 21% of all accidents reported.

10. Analysis of the causal factors for this quarter's accidents has shown that a high number of injuries were the result of slips, trips and falls. A proportion of this type of accident can be attributed to lack of care when carrying out certain activities and failure to undertake a thorough visual inspection of the environment before proceeding. These simple measures can have a dramatic effect on the reduction of accidents.

	Accidents	RIDDOR	% Rate on Establishment
July – September 2004	26	8	3.1
October – December 2004	23	6	2.7
January – March 2005	13	2	1.65
April – June 2005	17	3	2.1
July – September 2005	19	4	2.4

11. A Community Safety (CS) Working Group is being piloted this month. Each Station has been asked to provide a CS 'ambassador' who will then cascade any relevant information back to their Station. The aim of the group will be to discuss current CS issues relating to education, events, campaigns, training issues, etc, and to share examples of best practice across the organisation.

Items of Interest

Appointments

12. Lucy Phillips will commence the post of temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer from 1 December 2005.
13. Assistant Chief Fire Officer John Hall will commence on 1 December 2005.
14. Deputy Chief Fire Officer interviews took place on 13 and 14 December 2005.

Urban Search And Rescue (USAR)

15. Further to our previous report to the FRA on 23 September 2005, confirmation has been received that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service will be provided with an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) facility by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The USAR facility will be located within the geographical area of Hereford and Worcester, constituting one of twenty strategic locations within England and Wales.
16. To date, one hundred and seven expressions of interest have been received from staff acknowledging their interest in forming a part of the Urban Search and Rescue capability for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. A manager has now been appointed. Discussions are progressing with West Mercia Constabulary to locate the USAR vehicles and team at a new WMC facility at Defford.

17. A Station Manager has been appointed who will lead and manage the USAR team and is expected to take up the position in early January. Ongoing recruitment for further team members to take place in the New Year.

Equality and Diversity

Cultural Practices Questionnaire

18. The questionnaire was distributed to all staff, and nearly 300 replies were received. Information is being collated, and will be used as evidence to support cultural changes as a result of the Rank to Role migration.

Incidents

Mother and daughter saved from arson attack on house

19. On Wednesday 28 September 2005, crews were called to an incident in the Belmont area of Hereford where a mother and daughter needed to be rescued from an upstairs bedroom window following a suspected arson attack on their home whilst they were asleep. The family were alerted by the fire detector which was fitted in the home. The fire control operator who took the call at 12.10am stayed on the telephone keeping the mother calm and talking her through ways to help keep them safe whilst crews from Hereford were on their way. Within six minutes from receiving the call Firefighters were on the scene and both mother and daughter were led to safety.

Flash flooding across the two counties

20. On Wednesday 12 October 2005, fire crews were called to several flood related incidents. Fire crews were kept busy pumping water away from homes and commercial businesses, following flash floods that hit the area. The extreme conditions caused traffic chaos with drains being pushed to bursting point and water flooded carriageways.

Flooding experts advise in the USA

21. Chief Fire Officer Paul Hayden recently led a group of UK Firefighters and Officials from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the USA to study the management of major flood events, with a particular interest in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The team were able to identify a number of key points from the multi-agency approach to flood events pioneered in North Carolina over the last ten years. They will be working over the next year with colleagues from the Environment agency and other emergency services to establish U.K national standards and procedures for dealing with incidents of this type. After the trip, a flood management seminar was held at fire service headquarters, both to share the initial findings from the research, and to launch a memorandum of understanding between the Fire, Police and Ambulance services in Hereford and Worcester that sets out joint working arrangements for water rescues. Also at the seminar, was US Battalion Chief Tim Rogers from Charlotte, North Carolina, who gave an informative and amusing outline of the lessons learned in dealing with hurricane events. The lessons learnt to date and the programme of work for the next year was shared with fire and rescue services nationally by the Chief Fire Officer, who chaired a session on flood management at this year's national fire conference in Manchester.

Fire crews attend house explosion

22. On Friday 21 October 2005 at 1.15pm, four appliances and other emergency agencies attended a house explosion in Kempsey in which the roof was lifted and the doors and windows were blown out. Ten Firefighters attended the incident using breathing apparatus. Sadly, on arrival the crews reported a fatality. Both the cause of death and the cause of the fire are under investigation.

Handset Trial

23. Interactive handsets similar to those used by audiences on 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' have been trialled by children at Madley Primary School. They are linked to a computer and the children can use them to answer questions and take part in games about fire safety.

Information for Members

Meetings of the Authority's Committees

24. **The Appointments Committee** has also met to consider the appointment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer. An update will be given at the meeting.
25. **The Audit and Budget Committee** met on 13 October 2005 and 25 November 2005 and considered the following matters: 2005/06 Budget Monitoring, 2006/07 Budget Preparation; the 2004/05 Audit Letter, the 2005/06 Audit Plan and Treasury Activities 2005/06.
26. **The Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee** has not met since the Authority's last meeting. However following Mr RM Udall's reappointment as Labour Group Leader he is ineligible to continue as Member of the Committee and a new Chairman therefore needs to be elected. Mr A Fry has been appointed to the seat on the Committee vacated by Mr Udall.

Recommendation

That the Authority considers whether it wishes to appoint a Chairman of the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee or to leave the matter to be determined by the Committee.

27. **The Standards Committee** met on 18 November 2005 and considered a protocol on the Use of Resources by Members, the appointment of additional Independent Members to the Standards Committee; reports on the latest meeting of the Independent Members' Forum and the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees and has discussed a possible ethical audit of the Authority by the Committee.
28. Copies of the Minutes of these meetings have been or will be circulated to Members of the Authority.

Community Fire Safety

Education Activity

29. Currently there is a focus on recruitment to various vacant posts in order to meet our core activities. The new posts are as follows:
30. Community Safety Manager – This post is responsible for the development of Community Safety Strategies, progressing the wider safety agenda and supporting local area agreements and partnership opportunities.
31. Juvenile Firesetters Co-ordinator – This new post will specialise in the reduction of deliberate firesetting for the organisation. There is a need to co-ordinate a team of advisers and to progress further the Juvenile Firesetters Awareness Group (JAG) project which takes place on Fire Stations in target areas in partnership with Social Services. It is envisaged that the postholder will strengthen the current links with schools and partner organisations and will liaise closely with the Youth Offending Team (YOT).
32. Youth Services Officer – A primary focus for this department is to reach those outside the mainstream arena and, in particular, young people at risk of offending. This post will work with young people and partner organisations in developing youth schemes and work experience programmes including Crucial Crew events.
33. Community Safety Advisors – There are three new posts based at Redditch, Kidderminster and Worcester Fire Stations. In line with the Government agendas for neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion, the postholders will engage with Communities and partner agencies with the aim of delivering fire safety messages to hard to reach and vulnerable members of the community.
34. Community Development Officer – The postholder will continue to further our links into excluded and minority communities across the two counties and seek to contribute to the Community Cohesion agenda and raise the profile of the organisation across the two counties.

Legislative Fire Safety

Licensing Act 2003

35. Legislative Fire Safety Officers continue to address the issue of transfer, variation and renewal of Licenses and deal with new applications in relation to the Licensing Act 2003. The Government have now confirmed that all these applications will come into force on Thursday 24 November 2005. From that date the hours that a licensed premises can operate will vary from establishment to establishment depending on their variation and working arrangements.

Local Authority Building Control

36. Following recent discussions between Wyre Forest and Wychavon Building Control Departments a process of secondment has been established between our District Fire Safety Department and these offices. This has taken place via our Malvern Fire Safety District Office and involved two trainee members being shown the various consultation procedures that we are involved with together with our own working

practices. It is expected that this will be reciprocated in that our new trainee staff will be given the opportunity to spend time with other Building Control Departments and forge greater links and understanding of the needs of our partners.

Review of Approved Document B (Fire Safety matters)

37. Currently our Officers are involved in the review of this document and establishing a co-ordinated response to the ODPM covering issues such as introduction of Fire Sprinklers into Residential Care Homes. It is anticipated that the new Approved Document will be issued during the late spring, early summer 2006.

Marketing

Student Safety

38. The Service is working in partnership with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to promote fire Safety Awareness to the Student population. A number of 1.6m high posters have been placed in key campus locations, supported by TV advertising on the plasma screens in the busy Student Union area. University College Worcester has in the past been one of the target premises to reduce unwanted fire calls and it is expected that this campaign will reduce such calls.

Business

39. An advert has been placed in the Worcestershire County Council Business Guide. This advert has been designed to help profile our Service as a proactive organisation with advice to help business prevent fire before it starts! Legislative Fire Safety and Training and Development Departments have been highlighted along with the potential benefits to companies who employ Retained Firefighters.

Diwali

40. NCFSC Posters were distributed in key locations to help raise fire safety awareness amongst the ethnic S.E. Asian populations who celebrate Diwali. The Services Marketing Officer organised a partnership project with West Midlands Fire Service to further promote Fire Safety Awareness using Radio XL, one of the largest Asian radio stations in the UK. Area Manager John Das-Gupta, in conjunction with an Outreach Worker from WMFS, conducted a one hour live chat and phone-in show.
41. During the broadcast our Services were able to promote the work we do to make staff aware of issues surrounding equality and diversity. This will help to build long-term trust and enhance the profile of the Fire Service when reaching out to some of our 'at risk' communities.

Eid

42. NCFSC Posters were distributed in key locations to help raise fire safety awareness amongst the Muslim populations who celebrate Eid. The Service took part in a live radio interview for broadcast to the Muslim population across central England on behalf of the Regional Fire Services. Key safety messages were promoted in a format suited to the target audience.

Road Safety

43. Working in Partnership with Worcestershire County Councils' Road Safety Team, an advert has been placed in the Worcester County Council Road Safety Guide. The advert highlights the increasing number of serious vehicle-related collisions the Fire Service attends, and reminds readers about the main causes of these collisions. Both national and local statistics highlight that inattention is the most significant factor in the majority of KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) road related incidents.

Road Safety Week (w/c 7 November 2005)

44. The Service formed a partnership with Ambulance and Police Services to promote the issues surrounding road safety at this time of year. A joint press release was issued and key information extracted from the release was copied onto the Fire Service Website.
45. Investments made in marketing equipment over previous years by both WMFS and H&WFRS will save the Regional Fire Services significant sums of money to have a presence and add to the professionalism of our presence.

Christmas Safety

46. A number of projects have been started to promote safety over the festive season.
47. Advertising space has been booked in Cinema Magazines, which develop key fire safety messages promoted earlier in the year.
48. Following last year's successful campaign, it is planned that a series of press releases will be issued in conjunction with West Mercia Police and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service that will jointly promote the potentially divergent security and safety messages in a coherent and consistent manner to local residents.
49. A national advertising campaign is planned to re-commence around this period to promote key basic fire safety messages.

Health and Safety

Stress

50. Following on from the Stress Audit, the Department has arranged a number of training events to take place in October and November, this includes three Managing Stress in the Workplace for Managers; two half-day focus groups for Fire Control; and one day of full training for members of the Stress Review Group. In addition, the Department is also in discussion with the International Stress Management Association (ISMA) regarding the National Stress Week to be held in November and the participation of the Service in this event.

MARRC

51. The Department has attended the Motion Analysis Research and Rehabilitation Centre (MARRC) at the University of Worcester to investigate their objective three-dimensional motion capture, analysis and rehabilitation programmes, which can perform full kinematics analysis, including the position and orientation of any body, equipment or machine part, in addition to measuring external and internal forces and

torques. There appear to be numerous opportunities for the Fire Service and we are currently looking to use their facilities to assist with the rehabilitation and return to operational duties of one of our Firefighters who lost his lower left leg beneath the knee in a non-work related accident.

Collaboration with the HSE

52. Liaison has taken place with the HSE on the national Reducing Manual Handling Injuries campaign, Backs! 2005. A pilot training package for delivery to operational personnel is being developed. A Manual Handling technique postcard was also developed and issued to all personnel involved in the migration to the new Headquarters over the past two months to aid in preventing manual handling injuries.

Water Rescue Strategy

53. The Unit has also been involved in the development of the Service's Water Rescue Strategy, and has provided advice and guidance on this area. We are also considering the wider aspects of the Service's policy and to this end, have formally invited the local HSE Inspectorate to participate in the development of the Service's response.

Lone Working

54. The Department has investigated strategies for minimising the risks to Lone Workers and has met with ADT and our Communications Officer to investigate the 'Identicom' product, which is now currently on trial.

West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB)

Project P1.1 Management of Health and Safety

55. The development of the Regional Health and Safety Calendar for 2006 continues and the Group has also purchased the Accident Reporting and Recording System from Devon Fire & Rescue Service which will streamline the reporting and recording of all accident, near miss and other safety critical incidents and facilitate more effective manipulation of the data collated.

Training – RoSPA

56. Department staff have successfully attained the Society's QSA Auditors Course to assist with the organisation's attain of Level 5 of the RoSPA Award Scheme.
57. Progress continues on the review of all Health and Safety training packages, working closely with Media and Design staff to enable the control and availability of the final packages.

Reviewed and New Service Policies and Instructions (SPIs)

58. ODPM have also issued another consultation document in relation to School Fire Safety as part of the Building Bulletin procedure. It is pleasing to note that the issue of fitting Fire Sprinklers to such premises has been recognised and that they allow freedom of design for Architects and Local Education Authorities.

Training and Development Centre

59. The last quarter was again a busy period for the Training and Development Centre for both the delivery and development of courses
60. Work is now complete on the new Hot Fire Training facility at Kidderminster with the building commissioned in November 2005. This entailed training a number of BA Instructors who will then deliver a new Hot Fire Training course scheduled to commence January 2006.
61. As the PDR process is ongoing, the Centre has entered into partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce to provide and deliver external training on information technology and courses designed to strengthen our employees' ability to deliver the objectives identified in the recent IRMP plan.
62. In line with Best Value performance planning, a five-year plan for the Training and Development Centre has been developed. The objectives of this plan have been designed to support the overall Service Plan 2005/2009.
63. Also, in line with IRMP, Water Safety Operator and Supervisor courses have commenced and have been programmed over the next six months to incorporate all operational Watch and Crew Managers and a number of Firefighters on each Wholetime Station across the Service.
64. As part of Regional Collaboration two Recruit Courses are being run with Staffordshire and West Midlands. These Firefighters will be operational between the months of December 2005 and February 2006.
65. The Commercial Training Department continues to meet the training needs of some local companies. Cadburys based at Marlbrook, Leominster have just undertaken a total of five days of training to instruct their fire teams in the control of spillages. Crown Packaging (formerly CMB), who are based at Worcester, have just completed their annual refresher training for their fire team, which involved training a total of twenty-three people over three weekend days.

Summary of Courses: 01/07/05 – 30/09/05			
Operational Courses	33	328	Training Days
Commercial Courses	20	227	Students Trained
Meetings & Seminars	57	515	Attendees

Suggestion Scheme

66. During the past twelve months the Service has continued to receive an encouraging number of proposals from employees for consideration as part of the 'Ideas' Staff Suggestion Scheme. Ten proposals have been evaluated in this period, of which four

have been identified as award winners; these were submitted by Simon Cusack, Roger Snipe, Robin Baer and Michael Rowlands.

67. The suggestions made were as follows:
- Simon Cusack – the purchase of disposable Bag Valve Masks for use with resuscitation equipment - Award of £50 plus a Certificate of Commendation.
 - Roger Snipe - the adoption of standard message pads for use across the Service - Award of £50 plus a Certificate of Commendation.
 - Robin Baer – the replacement of standard salvage sheets with a non-slip alternative - Award of Certificate of Commendation
 - Michael Rowlands – categorising documents issued by the Service for general distribution to employees according to priority - Award of Certificate of Commendation.
68. The above named individuals have been invited to attend today's meeting in order to receive their awards. Under the terms of the scheme, awards are announced annually and there will be a further update for Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority in twelve months' time.

Carol Service

69. The Family and Friends Carol Service for 2005 will be held at Hereford Cathedral on Tuesday 20 December 2005. Following the celebration, mulled wine and mince pies will be served at the Town Hall.

Equality and Diversity/FAWAG Update

The Equality and Diversity Strategy

70. Progress has continued against the objectives of the Equality and Diversity Strategy.
71. The generic "Equalities Scheme" is still in development, with consultation underway regarding current good practice nationally, and the implications of our statutory responsibilities under equality legislation.
72. A revised Equal Opportunities Policy and Harassment and Bullying Policy have been produced, and are under consultation. As is a new draft Transfer and Promotions policy, in line with the principles of Equality & Diversity.
73. A draft Ethical Framework has been produced and this has incorporated the work undertaken on producing a code of conduct for all employees.

The Disability Discrimination Act

74. External consultants have verified the Service's work across audits, and have established good practice in the making of reasonable adjustments across all our

properties. A report is being compiled by the consultants, with recommendations, which the Service will review and action appropriately.

The Fairness at Work Advisory Group

- 75. The group has considered the revised Equal opportunities and Harassment and Bullying policies.
- 76. The group is now also considering implications of the IRMP community safety project.

Uniform Trials

- 77. As part of the work on cultural change, a short pilot has commenced involving the use of different styles and colours of uniform worn by staff. Volunteers representing Wholetime, Retained Duty System, commercial training activities, and front-line support staff are trialling the uniforms to assess new workwear. The results of this pilot, together with the outcomes of the Cultural Practices Questionnaire, will inform future changes.

National Mela 18 - 20 November 2005

- 78. In conjunction with Fire and Rescue Services in the East and West Midlands region, Hereford & Worcester took part in the above event at the NEC in Birmingham. Attendance at this event, as in the past, focussed upon widening the message about career opportunities in the Fire and Rescue Service for people from ethnic communities and to promote greater fire safety awareness.

RMB Project

- 79. The RMB project is at a critical phase, and reports are being compiled for each of the areas of research that has been conducted through the project. Initial indicative evidence and recommendations will be available early in the New Year.

Background Papers

None

District	Station	Quarter 1 2005//06			Quarter 2 2005/06		
		Total Fires	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents	Total False Alarms	Total Fires	Total Special Service (SS) Incidents	Total False Alarms
South	21 Worcester	162	72	193	143	72	213
	26 Droitwich	29	40	48	39	30	76
	28 Evesham	40	15	51	40	23	61
	29 Pebworth	7	3	2	4	0	5
	30 Broadway	9	3	8	7	3	16
	31 Pershore	13	14	15	21	10	19
	32 Upton	9	6	15	11	24	17
	41 Malvern	43	20	43	42	22	67
	53 Tenbury Wells	2	1	6	9	4	8
District Total		314	174	381	316	188	482
North	22 Stourport	49	17	33	80	13	30
	23 Bewdley	12	4	5	16	9	8
	24 Kidderminster	92	50	115	82	43	118
	25 Bromsgrove	74	37	98	82	36	99
	27 Redditch	148	76	152	171	64	158
District Total		375	184	403	431	165	413
West	42 Ledbury	16	10	33	16	11	25
	43 Fownhope	6	2	10	4	2	15
	44 Ross on Wye	13	6	15	15	13	10
	45 Whitchurch	1	1	0	1	8	4
	46 Hereford	64	51	79	91	55	102
	47 Ewyas Harold	2	2	1	1	1	3
	48 Eardisley	3	4	1	3	4	4
	49 Kington	3	1	0	0	2	2
	50 Leintwardine	2	2	0	2	3	1
	51 Kingsland	4	6	5	4	3	6
	52 Leominster	11	5	12	20	9	28
	54 Bromyard	10	11	12	13	9	10
	55 Peterchurch	3	3	2	5	4	5
District Total		138	104	170	175	124	215
GRAND TOTAL		827	462	954	922	477	1110

Fire Statistics 1 July 2005 to 30 Sept 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	51	92	0	143	0	1	0
	26 Droitwich	21	18	0	39	0	0	0
	28 Evesham	17	22	1	40	1	1	0
	29 Pebworth	2	2	0	4	0	0	0
	30 Broadway	3	4	0	7	0	0	0
	31 Pershore	6	14	1	21	0	0	0
	32 Upton	7	4	0	11	0	0	0
	41 Malvern	13	29	0	42	0	0	0
	53 Tenbury	4	5	0	9	0	0	0
District Total	124	190	2	316	1	1	0	
North	22 Stourport	19	61	0	80	0	0	0
	23 Bewdley	3	12	1	16	0	0	0
	24 Kidderminster	36	44	2	82	0	1	0
	25 Bromsgrove	38	44	0	82	0	0	0
	27 Redditch	56	114	1	171	2	4	0
District Total	152	275	4	431	2	5	0	
West	42 Ledbury	11	5	0	16	0	0	0
	43 Fownhope	2	2	0	4	0	0	0
	44 Ross on Wye	8	7	0	15	0	0	0
	45 Whitchurch	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	46 Hereford	34	57	0	91	2	6	1
	47 Ewyas Harold	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	48 Eardisley	1	1	1	3	0	0	0
	49 Kington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	50 Leintwardine	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
	51 Kingsland	2	1	1	4	0	0	0
	52 Leominster	11	8	1	20	0	0	0
	54 Bromyard	4	8	1	13	0	0	0
	55 Peterchurch	3	1	1	5	0	0	0
District Total	78	92	5	175	2	6	1	
GRAND TOTAL		354	557	11	922	5	13	1

Special Service Incidents 1 Jul 2005 to 30 Sep 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	72	0	72	23	8	2
	26 Droitwich	30	0	30	0	5	2
	28 Evesham	23	0	23	1	2	0
	29 Pebworth	0	0	0	0	0	0
	30 Broadway	3	0	3	0	1	0
	31 Pershore	10	0	10	1	3	0
	32 Upton	24	0	24	1	8	0
	41 Malvern	22	0	22	4	6	0
	53 Tenbury	4	0	4	0	0	0
District Total	188	0	188	30	33	4	
North	22 Stourport	13	0	13	0	4	0
	23 Bewdley	9	0	9	2	2	2
	24 Kidderminster	43	0	43	8	12	1
	25 Bromsgrove	36	0	36	3	8	0
	27 Redditch	64	0	64	3	11	2
District Total	165	0	165	16	37	5	
West	42 Ledbury	11	0	11	1	2	0
	43 Fownhope	2	0	2	0	0	0
	44 Ross on Wye	13	0	13	0	6	0
	45 Whitchurch	8	0	8	1	10	1
	46 Hereford	55	0	55	5	12	2
	47 Ewyas Harold	1	0	1	0	0	0
	48 Eardisley	4	0	4	0	2	0
	49 Kington	2	0	2	0	0	0
	50 Leintwardine	3	0	3	0	3	0
	51 Kingsland	3	0	3	0	4	0
	52 Leominster	9	0	9	1	7	0
	54 Bromyard	9	0	9	0	4	0
55 Peterchurch	4	0	4	0	3	0	
District Total	124	0	124	8	53	3	
GRAND TOTAL		477	0	477	54	123	12

False Alarms and Fire Safety Statistics 1 Jul 2005 to 30 Sep 2005

District	Station	False Alarm Malicious	False Alarm Good Intent	False Alarm Apparatus	Total False Alarms
South	21 Worcester	13	44	156	213
	26 Droitwich	4	13	59	76
	28 Evesham	1	11	49	61
	29 Pebworth	0	4	1	5
	30 Broadway	0	1	15	16
	31 Pershore	0	8	11	19
	32 Upton	0	11	6	17
	41 Malvern	4	16	47	67
	53 Tenbury	0	0	8	8
District Total		22	108	352	482
North	22 Stourport	2	10	18	30
	23 Bewdley	0	2	6	8
	24 Kidderminster	11	22	85	118
	25 Bromsgrove	5	22	72	99
	27 Redditch	14	43	101	158
District Total		32	99	282	413
West	42 Ledbury	0	2	23	25
	43 Fownhope	0	0	15	15
	44 Ross on Wye	0	1	9	10
	45 Whitchurch	0	3	1	4
	46 Hereford	5	28	69	102
	47 Ewyas Harold	0	1	2	3
	48 Eardisley	0	1	3	4
	49 Kington	2	0	0	2
	50 Leintwardine	0	1	0	1
	51 Kingsland	0	1	5	6
	52 Leominster	2	7	19	28
	54 Bromyard	2	1	7	10
	55 Peterchurch	0	2	3	5
District Total		11	48	156	215
GRAND TOTAL		65	255	790	1110

Fire Safety Inspections 1 July 2005 to 30 Sept 2005	
Full inspections	16
Re-inspections	543
Plan inspections	33
Follow-up inspections	119
Specific inspections	1417
Building Regulations Plans/Consultations	296

7. PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF RESOURCES

Purpose of Report

1. To consider recommending the adoption of a protocol to govern the use of resources by Members.
-

Background

2. The Standards Committee's terms of reference provide for it to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Members of the Authority. The Authority has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance which 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. The Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring compliance with certain requirements placed upon the Authority by the Code.
3. One aspect of the Code, dimension 5(a), requires the Authority 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.*'
4. In reviewing compliance with the Code at its meeting in March, 2005, the Committee noted that the adoption of a Code governing Members' use of resources, possibly based on the model being developed by Herefordshire Council, would assist this aim.
5. The National Statutory Code of Conduct for Councillors provides that a Councillor when using council resources must act in accordance with the Council's requirements and ensure such resources are not used for political purposes (except in certain specified circumstances).
6. The Standards Board for England strongly recommended that local authorities should adopt protocols to guide Members in this area but to date have not issued any model text or detailed guidance.

Issues

7. Herefordshire Council approved a protocol on the use of Council resources in July 2005. The Standards Committee considered this in November and a protocol modelled on the one adopted by that Council is appended for the Authority's consideration.
8. The Standards Committee's attention was drawn to two issues which had required particular consideration by Herefordshire Council's Standards Committee:
 - the prohibition on using council resources for political purposes and the definition of "political purposes"; and

- the use of ICT facilities and in particular access to the World Wide Web and the use of the Council's e-mail address.
9. The Committee noted that Herefordshire Council's Standards Committee had sought advice from the Standards Board for England on aspects of the protocol, but had been critical of the Board's response on the definition of "political purposes" and that issue remained unresolved.
10. Another issue had been the wish by that Council's ICT Department to include detailed ICT conditions and instructions in the use of resources protocol. In the end the Committee opted for a simple user-friendly document which at the same time offered sound guidance for Members. Detailed ICT issues were exported to a document for which the Council administration had taken responsibility.
10. The Standards Committee noted that the Authority had not at the moment got sufficient guidance in place to cover these detailed ICT issues. It was proposed that policies should be revised as appropriate and reported to the Committee, recognising that it would not wish to take ownership of such policies but rather to ensure that any ethical issues were appropriately addressed and the policies sufficiently comprehensive.

Recommendation

The Standards Committee recommends that

- (a) the Protocol on the use of resources by Members as appended be adopted; and**
- (b) it be noted that a further report is to be made to the Committee on detailed provisions to govern the use of ICT resources.**

Background Papers

None

PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF AUTHORITY RESOURCES BY MEMBERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority's Code of Conduct for Members provides that, when using Authority resources, you must ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate the functions of the Authority or of any office to which you have been elected or appointed.
- 1.2 A breach of this Protocol is a breach of the Code and carries penalties up to and including disqualification from office.
- 1.3 If you are in any doubt about the application of this Protocol, you should seek advice from the Director of Corporate Services.

2. Authority Resources

- 2.1 These include: the use of Authority premises; ICT equipment such as computers and software; telephone and fax; photocopiers; stationery; postage; Authority transport; secretarial and clerical support; and allowances and expenses

3. Permitted use

- 3.1 Except as set out in Section 5 of this Protocol, you may use Authority resources only on Authority business. If you represent the Authority on outside bodies you may use Authority resources to assist you in this role, and this Protocol applies to such use.
- 3.2 You may use Authority resources for political purposes where that use will facilitate the functions of the Authority or any office you hold at the Authority. This will include e-mailing colleagues in your and other political groups registered with the Authority (this will include the Independent Group), setting up political group meetings and conducting discussions on policy with political colleagues locally, regionally or nationally.

4. Prohibited use

- 4.1 You may not use Authority resources:
 - For the publication of material which, in whole or in part, appears designed to affect public support for a political party. This includes campaigning leaflets and correspondence.
 - For mass mailings, even if these are related to Authority business.
 - During an election period to promote yourself or others as candidates to the electorate.

5. ICT equipment

5.1 You may make modest personal use of Authority-installed computers but you must not permit others (for example, family members) to do so.

6. Use of the herefordshire.gov.uk or worcestershire.gov.uk address for Fire and Rescue Authority Business

6.1 The Authority should not publish material designed to affect public support for a political party. You should therefore not use your e-mail address as registered with the Authority (name@herefordshire.gov.uk)/(name@worcestershire.gov.uk) for this purpose nor, on a matter of controversy, to promote a point of view which is associated with a political party.

6.2 E-mails from your official address will be seen to be associated with the Authority and may get preferential treatment, or may be thought by the public to be seeking such treatment. You should not therefore use the address for placing orders and similar activity as a private individual.

6.3 You will be provided with a personal e-mail address to allow modest personal use of ICT equipment as permitted in Section 5.

November 2005

8. APPLICATION FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on a successful application to participate in the “Real Improvement, Real Time” Performance Improvement Programme.

2. Whilst the Authority’s ‘good’ rating at its CPA assessment this year was a positive result, the Service and its staff are committed to continuous improvement and attention is now focussed on securing an ‘excellent’ rating at our next assessment. The Audit Commission is now ‘raising the bar’ on performance, making achieving excellence an even more challenging objective for the Service and work is now under way to ensure good progress is made on the issues identified in our improvement plan.

3. During October 2005 expressions of interest were sought from Fire & Rescue Authorities to participate in piloting a capacity building programme, sponsored by the ODPM and LGA, and delivered by PriceWaterhouseCoopers and SOLACE Enterprises. Hereford and Worcester made an application to the programme and have been selected to participate in the Fire and Rescue Authority pilot along with five other Authorities.

4. The first introductory meeting took place on Thursday 1 December at Buckinghamshire Fire Authority Headquarters. A performance workshop is planned before Christmas and the first residential learning event is scheduled for 23 – 25 January 2006.

5. The pilot will be subsidised and will cost £6,000 per Authority. The tailored support element will also be available and will be negotiated and costed with each Authority on an individual basis.

6. We believe that participation in the “Real Improvement, Real Time” programme will support us in delivering a step change in performance improvement across the organisation, addressing key priorities already identified through our recent self-assessment process and CPA report and supporting us in delivering excellence in the future.

7. The programme vision aligns effectively with the Authority’s current performance improvement objectives, in particular its focus on changing behaviours and cultures and building a team of champions through addressing ‘real’ issues as the catalyst for change. We have positive relationships both locally and within the region and will be committed to sharing our learning with local and regional partners.

8. Through participation in the programme we will address culture, communications and staff engagement using one (or more) of the following issues already presented at roundtable in our improvement plan, as a case study to deliver improvement:

- Delivery of an Integrated Planning Process

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority
15 December 2005

- Staff Engagement in Performance Improvement
 - Communications
9. The programme will require a team of up to five people per Authority, drawn from a mix of:
- Senior members with responsibility for performance improvement;
 - Top team or Chief Executive;
 - Senior Manager(s) with responsibility for organisational and staff development or change management;
 - Senior Manager(s) with responsibility for corporate policy, strategy, partnership working and performance management;
 - Service heads; and/or
 - Middle Managers with responsibility for service planning and performance issues.
10. The programme consists of a package of tailored support and active learning to meet the individual needs of Authorities and Fire and Rescue Services. Three active learning events focusing on real 'live' issues and problems are planned:
- Delivering performance improvement;
 - The breakthrough – taking action; and
 - Embedding and networking the solutions.
11. If anyone would like to discuss the documents or requires further information regarding this programme, please contact Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer Lucy Phillips, Area Manager – Performance and Planning Mike Redfern or Performance Improvement Manager Mark Perrin.

Background papers

None

9. FiRe CONTROL PROJECT RISK UPDATE

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the FiRe Control Project Risks and any action taken to date to address these.
-

Background

2. Comprehensive and robust risk management processes must be in place to ensure the success of the Regional FiReControl Project. Unfortunately, National and Regional guidance is still awaited in many areas and the Authority is as yet unable to fully quantify these risks and create specific action plans to mitigate their effects.
3. However, the process of risk identification and assessment has commenced within Hereford & Worcester and the initial primary risks are identified within this report, along with any specific planned response actions.
4. Two significant areas of risk are addressed in this report: the future of the organisation's Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems, known as Legacy Systems, and existing and future resilience levels within the Fire Control Room.
5. In order to ensure that existing ICT Legacy Systems do not fail in the foreseeable future, various investments and maintenance options have been identified and progressed and these are detailed in *Paragraphs 7 - 11* of this paper.
6. In order to prepare the Fire Control Room for the future and to improve current resilience levels to support business continuity, staff re-training, outplacements and essential FiReControl Transition work, steps have already been taken to increase staffing levels within Fire Control as well as initial research into potential retention strategies. These issues are detailed in *Paragraphs 11-20* of this paper.

Information Communication Technology Systems

7. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service currently operate with a Mobilising Command and Control system and separate Management Information System (MIS) which were installed in 1995. The systems' maintainer has since changed and the respective maintenance contracts are nearing the end of their agreed contractual life.
8. Risk 1
 - *Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Mobilising Command and Control System was installed in 1995 and is nearing the end of its agreed maintenance contract due to cease in April 2006.*
 - **Action 1: Command and Control System Health check** - In September 2005 a Mobilising Command and Control Systems health check was undertaken in

order to confirm the system's current condition and projected operating ability. As a result a number of actions and upgrade work are planned to be undertaken to ensure that the system continues to operate effectively for the foreseeable future.

9. Risk 2

- *Continuation of support for existing Fire Service MIS (management information) and mobilisation systems and the financial implications of this.*
- **Action 1: User Group** - Ten Services, including Hereford & Worcester are currently using technology from the same supplier and have agreed to form an alliance through which to make representations to the ODPM to help protect their significant investment in this essential technology. These discussions are ongoing and will continue throughout the lifetime of the project.
- **Action 2: Review of current Maintenance Contracts** – Hereford & Worcester have entered into discussions with its supplier regarding the current maintenance timescales and future resilience preparations. Our supplier has strongly indicated their continued commitment to the Service for the next 3 – 5 years with contracts to that effect awaiting finalisation and signature.

Existing Legacy Main Scheme Radio System

10. Risk 3

- *The existing main scheme radio system is a single channel AM all informed radio, which has been in operation for over 30 years. It is in need of a high degree of planned maintenance in order to avoid total systems' failure.*
- **Action 1: Risk Assessment** – Hereford & Worcester has conducted a programme of extensive risk assessment of the current radio system in partnership with both the Firelink Project and its system maintainer. A programme of essential component replacement has been undertaken, which has been funded by the Firelink Project, resulting in considerable risk reduction. The system is currently considered to be at Low – Medium risk of failure.
- **Action 2: System Upgrade** - In November 2005 the Service also managed to secure replacement of the system's Radio Link Assembly Unit, which monitors and reports on all system status and fault identification. This work is being funded by the Firelink Project with installation planned for early in 2006.
- **Action 3: Provision of Mobile Phones** - The Service is also investigating the use of mobile phone provision for all front-line appliances employing a roaming sim card facility to support significantly increased reliability. This would provide the Service with a sound fallback option should the existing radio system fail. This would also provide the Service with increased communications coverage in those areas where poor radio reception is currently unavoidable and would also

be invaluable during periods of maintenance on the current system when the radio will not be available.

- **Action 4: Confirmation of Shared Hilltop Mast Facility** – The Service has received from each of its existing external radio mast providers written confirmation that the shared hilltop mast facility will be available to the organisation for the foreseeable future.

Fire Control Resilience

11. Following the recent Regional Control Centre (RCC) site locations announcement it has become evident that few of Hereford & Worcester's Fire Control staff are likely to wish to move into the new West Midlands RCC, which is to be based at Wolverhampton Business Park, Wolverhampton. This means that the Service will need to focus on the welfare, retention and re-deployment, as well as relocation options for its existing staff. These issues must be addressed as a priority to minimise the risk of staff leaving the Service and work is already underway to support them.
12. National and Regional guidance is awaited before the Service can address many of these areas in detail. However, current staff resilience levels within Fire Control have already been addressed (see para 20).

Future Demands on Fire Control

13. The FiReControl project has brought with it the requirement for radical change within the Fire Control Department and this process known as "**Transition**" effectively commenced following the RCC site announcements on 10 August 2005.
14. The Transition phase incorporates all preparations to move from Local Fire Control Rooms to Regional Control Centres including business processes, ICT procurement and review, operational procedures, Firelink installation and operation, data migration and human resource issues.
15. It is anticipated that Transition will impact considerably upon Fire Control's current workload and already stretched workforce in the run up to RCC go-live; in particular the following areas of demand will be prevalent:

Business Continuity

16. This includes the need for Fire Control to continue delivering its core business during the implementation of new National practices, procedures and technology which originate from such sources as Convergence and Firelink.

Staff Re-training

17. The need to release staff from their operational duties to participate in re-training to fulfil both internal requirements, such as new radio operation and National operational procedures, as well as re-training for re-deployment following the move to RCC. The organisation may also wish to offer staff re-training for alternative employment after RCC go-live as part of a retention package.

Outplacements

18. There may be a requirement to release staff from their operational duties to participate in work experience or outplacements elsewhere within the Service, if re-deployment options to other departments within the Service are to be explored as part of the HR solution.

FiReControl Transition Work

19. A considerable amount of additional internal preparation work is also anticipated throughout the Transition period. Such work will require the knowledge and skills of experienced Fire Control personnel who will need to be released from their operational duties to complete this work in time for cutover to RCC.

Service Preparation

20. Risk 1

- *Current staffing levels within Fire Control are currently stretched on a regular basis, workloads within Fire Control are likely to increase in the near future, and there is a likelihood of Fire Control staff leaving the Service to find alternative employment.*
- **Action 1: Increased Resilience Levels in Fire Control** – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have advertised for two additional Fire Control staff to increase staffing support available in Control. Once in place these two additional personnel should facilitate the release to two experienced personnel to be moved to a Day Duty shift pattern ultimately providing one extra member of staff on duty every day, 365 days per year, between the hours of 08:30 hrs – 20:30 hrs.
- This arrangement will enable the support of staff re-training, outplacements and essential FiReControl Transition work as detailed above. It will also support urgent additional night cover to be arranged by local agreement.
- The principle of employing personnel at this early stage in the project life is based upon the fact that it takes approximately two years to train a fully qualified Fire Control Operator and the Organisation cannot afford to wait until staff leave before recruiting replacements. It is considered preferable to make a balanced investment at this early stage in the project, in order to reduce risk to an essential organisational function at an acceptable level.
- **Action 2: Staff Retention Options** – The Service is actively researching options for Fire Control staff retention in close partnership with the other West Midlands Region constituent Fire and Rescue Services via the Regional HR Leads Group, the Control Thematic Group Project Board as well as day to day contact with the Regional Project Team currently based at Service Headquarters.
- Current progress on the preferred options for staff retention have been deferred due to the delay in announcing and establishing the Project Governance preferred option, this has now been identified as the Local Authority Company Model. It is

unlikely that this body will be established prior to April 2006 therefore delaying firm retention proposals until mid to late 2006.

- **Action 3: Personal Welfare Interviews** - Following the RCC site location announcement, Hereford & Worcester have initiated a series of Personal Welfare Interviews for all existing Fire Control staff. These interviews are designed to support the individual with any personal welfare issues as well as to offer advice, support and reassurance regarding their future employment with the Service and to date these have been well received by staff.

Background papers

None

10. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Purpose of report

1. To note the proceedings of the Regional Management Board.
-

Background

2. The West Midlands Regional Management Board, established in April 2004 is a Joint Committee comprising this Authority, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority, Warwickshire County Council and the West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority.
3. The main functions of the RMB are:
 - (a) to advise the Fire Authorities how best to implement the expectations of the government in their White Paper “Our Fire and Rescue Service”, paragraph 4.17 of which asks for RMBs to deliver, in accordance with national policies six strategic functions.
 - Resilience to emergencies especially potential chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack
 - Specialist or common services where appropriate such as fire investigation
 - Regional control rooms
 - Regional level procurement or procurement to national standards
 - Regional training strategies and delivery
 - Introducing regional personnel management and human resource management functions.
 - (b) To recommend to the Fire Authorities particular actions or projects to achieve the expectations in (a) above (and any other areas where co-operation is desirable).
 - (c) To agree the Work Programme.
 - (d) To request specific Fire Authorities to make their staff available to lead on particular projects as advisors to the RMB and in particular to draw up draft specifications and contract documentation.
 - (e) To oversee and monitor the development and implementation of such projects and work, including monitoring contracts.
 - (f) To consider the implications of any of the Fire Authorities not participating in any project or contract or work and to make any consequential recommendations.
 - (g) To consider a joint approach to bidding for external funding and to make recommendations.

4. The Regional Management Board has advisory status requiring significant actions it proposes to take to be agreed by the constituent bodies.
5. The most recent meeting of the Board was held on Friday 28 October 2005 at Service Headquarters, Worcester. Minutes of this meeting are enclosed separately for Members of the Committee and are available to the public on request.
6. The Chief Fire Officer will report at the meeting on any key issues which require specific consideration by the Authority.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the proceedings of the RMB be noted.

Background papers

None