Annual Service Review

2025-26

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Contents

Unless stated, figures used in this Review are as at 31 March 2026, rounded to the nearest 100 where appropriate. Population and household data are based on Census 2021 estimates.

OUR CORE CODE OF ETHICS

We follow the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in England which guides everything we do.

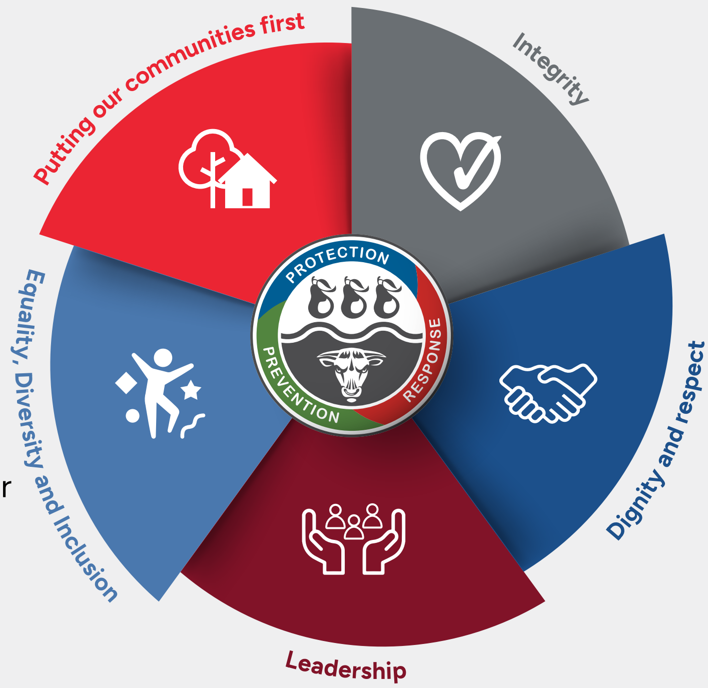
Putting our communities first
We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity
We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect
We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership
As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.



Foreword

This Annual Service Review provides an overview of the Fire and Rescue Service's performance and activity during the 2025-26 financial year (April 2025 to March 2026). It highlights our key areas of demand, delivery and improvement, and demonstrates how the Service continues to manage risk, respond to emergencies and protect the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Throughout the year, the Service maintained a resilient and adaptable 24/7 emergency response capability in line with the priorities set out in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30. The CRMP, referenced within this Review, was developed following extensive consultation with our communities, our workforce and a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring it is informed by local need, professional insight and partner perspectives. The Plan was formally approved by the Fire Authority as its core public-facing document, setting out the strategic direction and priorities for the Service over the next five years.

Last year, our operational crews responded to a wide range of incidents, including fires, road traffic collisions, flooding and other emergencies, ensuring that resources were deployed effectively and proportionately to meet changing risk.

During 2025-26, the Service attended 8,665 incidents, representing a 5.5% increase compared with the previous year. The most notable increase was the rise in fires, up 44% from the previous year. This was largely down to protracted periods of dry and hot weather over the spring and summer months resulting in over 100% rise in outdoor fires; increases on this scale were seen nationally last year. These trends reflect the evolving risk profile across our communities and reinforce the importance of a data-led approach to planning, prevention and operational response.

This Review sets out the substantial body of work delivered across the Service during the year to support continuous improvement and drive organisational and operational excellence. It demonstrates how our Response, Protection and Prevention activities, supported by effective enabling services, are aligned to our strategic objectives and focused on reducing risk, improving outcomes and keeping people safe.

The Review sits alongside our Annual Service Plan for 2026-27 and provides assurance on how we are delivering against the objectives set by the Fire Authority. This document explicitly shows the connection between the priorities set out in last year's Annual Service Plan and the work undertaken over the year, evidencing how our activity contributes to the longer-term aims of the CRMP. This reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making.

Further information about our work, performance and ongoing activity is available on the News and Publications sections of our website.

Finally, we would like to thank Fire Authority Members and all staff for their continued professionalism, commitment and dedication. Their contribution is integral to maintaining public trust and confidence and ensuring that the Service remains well prepared to meet current and future risks across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Jonathon Pryce KFSM
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

Councillor Roger Phillips OBE
Chairman of the Fire Authority

The Service 2025-26

25
Fire Stations

34
Fire Engines

£44.7 million
Budget

689 (754 roles)
Staff Members

4,755†
Road length in Miles

812,407*
Population

342,751*
Households

392,000
Area in Hectares

36,550*
Businesses

* Office for National Statistics 2025-26

† Department for Transport 2024-25

OUR PURPOSE, VISION AND MISSION

Our Purpose, Vision and Mission represents our commitment to putting our communities first, keeping people safe from fire and other risks and protecting the most vulnerable. They underpin everything we do, which benefits us as individuals, the whole Service and everyone in the communities we serve. You can find out more on our Service website.

PURPOSE

Why we are here

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks.

Responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

VISION

What we want to do

Building on our successes to continue to make a difference, improve lives and help secure resilient communities.

MISSION

What we do every day

As one professional team we will work hard every day to deliver high quality, sustainable services to our communities.

The Service 2025-26 continued

Leadership

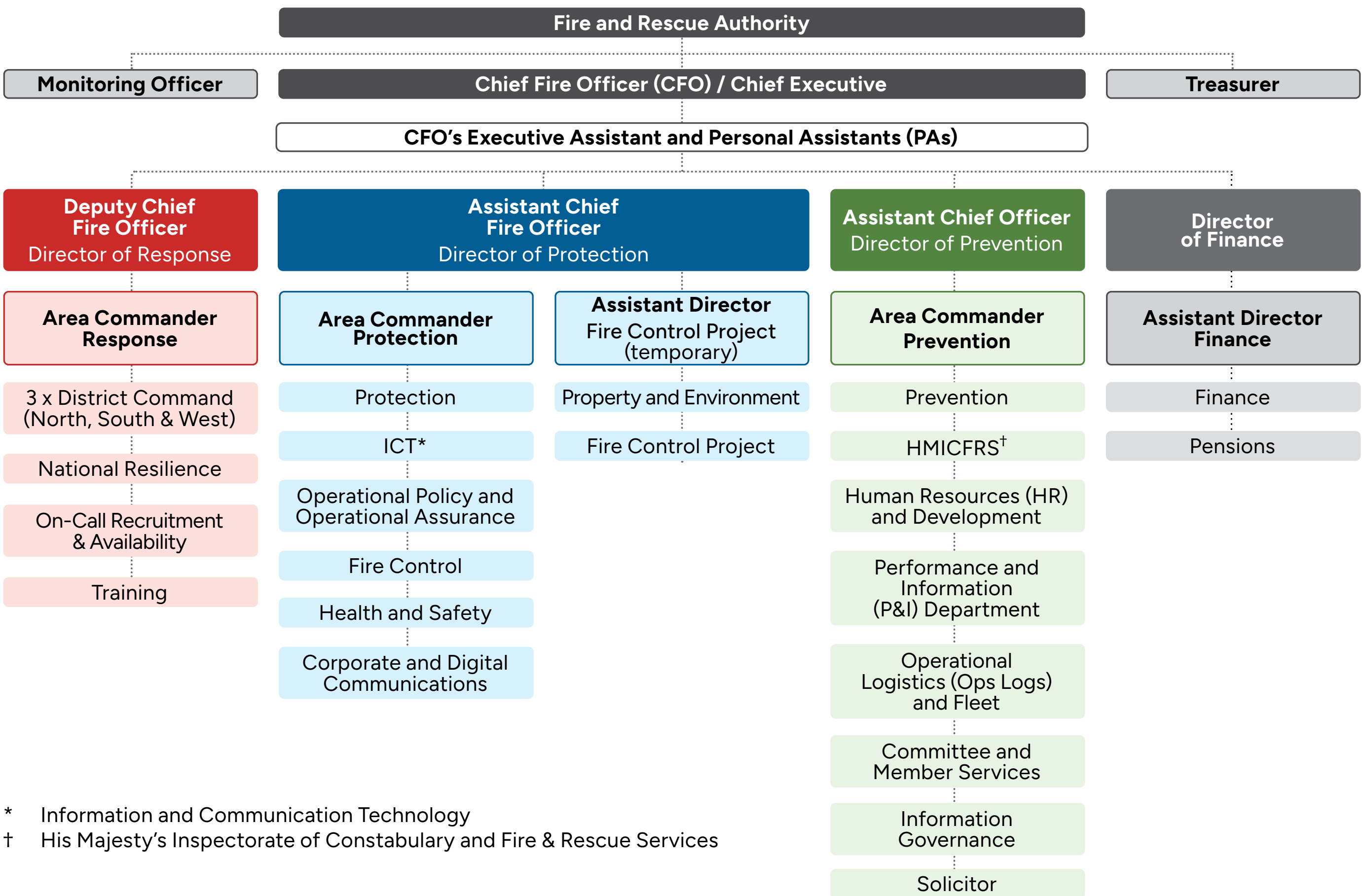
The Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) provides clear strategic direction and oversight, leading and managing the Service's core and enabling strategies to deliver the priorities set by the Fire Authority and articulated through the Community Risk Management Plan. In recent years, this governance and leadership approach has evolved into a wider Senior Management cohort, incorporating more than 50 middle managers, strengthening organisational capacity, assurance, and consistency of leadership across the Service.

The Service remains committed to developing current and future leaders to meet both operational and organisational challenges. A structured suite of Aspiring Leadership Programmes is in place at supervisory, middle management and strategic levels, supported by self-care and resilience development to promote sustainable leadership.

Continued investment in senior management engagement has provided leaders with opportunities to hear from external speakers, reflect on leadership behaviours, and consider their individual and collective impact on service culture and performance. This was reinforced through the Senior Leaders Away Day at Sixways Stadium, which supported collaboration, professional challenge and reflective learning.

The introduction of the Step Framework further strengthens the Service's leadership and people development approach, providing a clear, consistent and inclusive structure to support staff progression, talent management and succession planning, in line with HMICFRS expectations around workforce development and leadership capability.

Service Structure



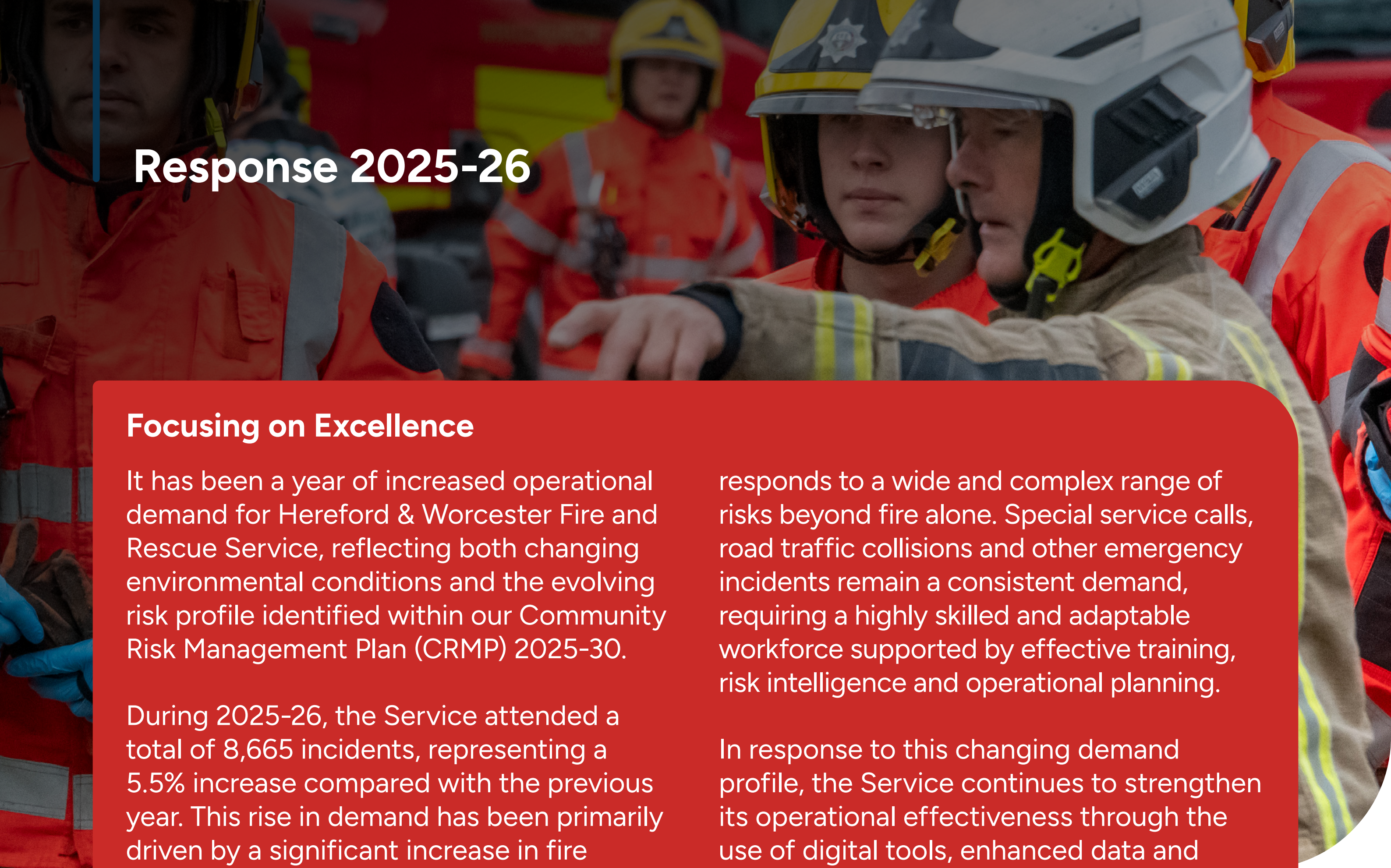
* Information and Communication Technology
† His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Our Priorities

Our headline priorities are set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30 and our Core Strategies: Response, Protection and Prevention. Together they represent our five-year strategy for keeping people, their homes, communities and the environment safe. Supporting them are a host of enabling strategies and plans, including the People Strategy and the annual Medium-Term Financial Plan. The strategies and plans are available on the Service website, but the following diagram highlights the main areas of focus for our work.

Over the year, we have been working hard to make sure our strategic aims for keeping our communities safe are well-embedded throughout all aspects of our work.

CRMP Aims		Strategy Aims
Responding to and dealing with fires and other emergencies promptly, safely and effectively.	**Response**	Availability Competence Intelligence
Protecting people, firefighters, property and the environment when fires, floods and other emergencies happen.	**Protection**	Promoting Fire Safety Increasing Compliance Investigating and Enforcing
Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place.	**Prevention**	Reducing Risk Awareness and Education
Providing a supportive environment for our workforce to develop, be confident and be empowered to make a positive difference for our communities.	**Valuing our Workforce 'People'**	Attract and Retain Develop and Train Recognise Success Health & Well-being Include and Collaborate
Using our resources efficiently and effectively to provide quality services.	**Value for Money 'Assets'**	Balanced Budget Sustainable use of Resources
Enabling a secure, data-driven organisation that enhances operational effectiveness and decision-making.	**Digital and Data**	User-Centric Designed Systems Data Intelligence Connectivity & Mobility Cyber Resilience



Response 2025-26

Focusing on Excellence

It has been a year of increased operational demand for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, reflecting both changing environmental conditions and the evolving risk profile identified within our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30.

During 2025-26, the Service attended a total of 8,665 incidents, representing a 5.5% increase compared with the previous year. This rise in demand has been primarily driven by a significant increase in fire incidents, particularly outdoor fires, which more than doubled during periods of prolonged warm and dry weather. These trends highlight the growing impact of seasonal risk factors and reinforce the importance of maintaining a flexible, intelligence-led response capability that is aligned to our CRMP priorities.

While fire-related activity has increased, there have been positive reductions in other areas of operational demand. Notably, flooding and water-related incidents decreased over the reporting period, reflecting both milder weather patterns and the effectiveness of targeted prevention activity, including water safety campaigns delivered in partnership with local and national stakeholders. Similarly, the overall number of false alarm incidents has reduced, indicating continued progress through our Protection activity, including improved call filtering and engagement with businesses to reduce unwanted fire signals.

The breadth and variation of incidents attended during the year demonstrate clearly that a modern fire and rescue service responds to a wide and complex range of risks beyond fire alone. Special service calls, road traffic collisions and other emergency incidents remain a consistent demand, requiring a highly skilled and adaptable workforce supported by effective training, risk intelligence and operational planning.

In response to this changing demand profile, the Service continues to strengthen its operational effectiveness through the use of digital tools, enhanced data and performance monitoring, and targeted workforce planning. The introduction of enhanced dashboards, availability monitoring systems and recruitment initiatives has enabled managers to identify emerging risks and address gaps in capacity at an early stage, ensuring that appliance availability and response standards are maintained.

This approach reflects our commitment to delivering against the core CRMP aims of availability, competence and intelligence. By continually reviewing risk, analysing incident data and aligning resources to need, we are ensuring that our response remains proportionate, efficient and focused on protecting the communities we serve.

Overall, the performance of the Service during 2025-26 demonstrates resilience, adaptability and a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Through a strong focus on data-led decision-making, prevention and protection activity, and investment in our people and systems, we are well positioned to respond to current and future risks in line with our strategic priorities.

Response 2025-26 continued

Year in Numbers:

8,665
Total Incidents Attended
↑ **5.5%** Increase
(452 incidents)

The total number of incidents attended was 8,665 including 86 incidents outside the Service's operational boundaries (29 fires, 28 special services and 28 false alarms). A increase of 5.5% was largely attributed to a rise in the number of outdoor fires attended during the summer due to hot, dry weather conditions.

19,274
Calls to Fire Control
↑ **13.3%** Increase
(2,265 calls)

Note that calls now include duplicate calls for some incidents reported.

Detailed statistics below are provided excluding incidents that occurred outside Service's area:

2,286
Fires
↑**43.6%** Increase
(694 incidents)

1,543
Accidental Fires
↑**39.5%** Increase
(437 incidents)

743
Deliberate Fires
↑**52.9%** Increase
(257 incidents)

580
Primary Building Fires*
↑**6.2%** Increase
(34 incidents)

1,278
Outdoor Fires
↑**104.5%** Increase
(653 incidents)

58
Non-Fatal Casualties from Fire Incidents
↑**13.7%** Increase

While there were 6 fire fatalities in 2025-26, the fire fatality rate in Herefordshire and Worcestershire remained low at **0.74 per 100,000** population which lies within the typical range of other Fire and Rescue Services with similar geography and demographics.

* Primary fires are more serious incidents involving property or vehicles, or where people are affected, requiring substantive operational response.

Response 2025-26 continued

2,616
Special Service Incidents*
↓1.4% Decrease
(36 incidents)

732
Road Traffic Collisions
↓0.3% Decrease
(2 incidents)

149
Flooding Incidents
↓20.3% Decrease
(38 incidents)

333
Assisting Other Agencies
↑2.5% Increase
(8 incidents)

162
Animal Rescues
↑15.7% Increase
(22 incidents)

68
Rescues from Water
↓46.0% Decrease
(58 incidents)

* Special Services include incidents such as other transport-related incidents which are not Road Traffic Collisions, medical incidents and Hazardous Material Incidents.

3,677
False Alarms
↓5.7% Decrease
(221 incidents)

2,580 False Alarms due to Apparatus
↓11.4% Decrease
(331 incidents)

1,032
Good Intent False Alarms
↑13.4% Increase
(122 incidents)

65
Malicious False Alarms
↓15.6% Decrease
(12 incidents)

Response 2025-26 continued

Incident Breakdown by District – North District (Worcestershire)

356,691
Population

149,259
Households

North District covers 180 square miles across northern Worcestershire with the majority of people living in the towns of Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Droitwich. It has five fire stations, the busiest of which during the year was Wyre Forest attending 1,295 incidents or 36% of incidents in the District.

3,596
Incidents attended

1,055
Special Service Incidents

1,013
Fires

1,528
False Alarms

Note: population and household estimates are based on HWFRS District area so do not precisely match Local Authority District Council boundaries.

Response 2025-26 continued

Incident Breakdown by District – South District (Worcestershire)

269,036
Population

112,639
Households

South District covers 490 square miles with most people living in the city of Worcester and the two towns of Malvern and Evesham. It is served by six fire stations including Worcester, the busiest station in the two counties, attending 1,523 incidents or 52% of incidents in the District during the year.

3,936
Incidents attended

737
Fires

899
Special Service Incidents

1,300
False Alarms

Note: population and household estimates are based on HWFRS District area so do not precisely match Local Authority District Council boundaries.

Response 2025-26 continued

Incident Breakdown by District – West District (Herefordshire)

186,680
Population

80,853
Households

West District covers the whole of Herefordshire. About a third of the population live in the city of Hereford, with most people living in smaller communities across the rural county. It has 13 fire stations, the busiest of which was Hereford attending 979 incidents or 48% of incidents in the District.

2,047
Incidents attended

536
Fires

662
Special Service Incidents

849
False Alarms

Note: population and household estimates are based on HWFRS District area so do not precisely match Local Authority District Council boundaries.

Response 2025-26 continued

Delivering our Service Objectives

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Availability
We will continually monitor Firefighter availability to ensure capacity and resilience across the Service area. We will work closely with the On-Call recruitment team to address high priority locations where active recruitment is required.	As a Service we continue to utilise digital solutions to assist in the delivery of key objectives. This includes the development of a post code tracker which allows members of the community to identify whether they are eligible to apply for an On-Call role based on their home or work location. In addition, we have developed bespoke dashboards that help managers to monitor performance, providing timely and accurate information linked to the availability of appliances. This system helps to develop greater understanding around availability and assist in identifying potential areas for concern so that they can be addressed before impacting performance. The On-Call Recruitment Team has actively supported stations across the Service where additional staff were required to improve or maintain availability. Through quarterly reviews high priority stations are identified and targeted for recruitment activities. The team have coordinated multiple local campaigns and supported candidates at every stage of the process, through to the start of the training course. A recent example is the campaign at Peterchurch, where the station's establishment almost doubled in size. The team has also worked with partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, engaged with local employers, and carried out numerous local recruitment events to promote the On-Call role within our communities.

Response 2025-26 continued

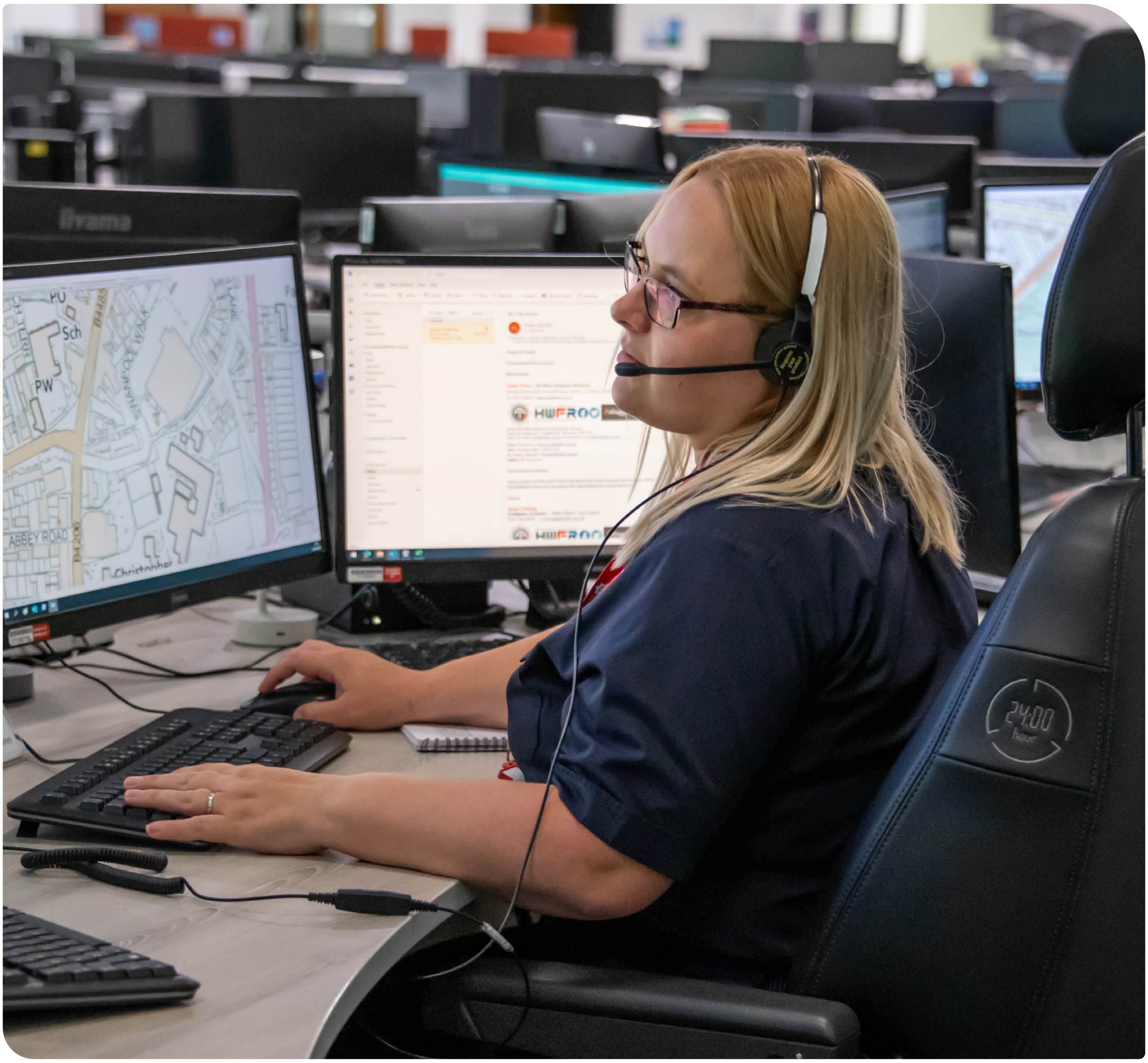
What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Competence
We will ensure Firefighters are well trained, well equipped and well led. Operational procedures will be reviewed and updated to align with National Operational Guidance (NOG), incorporating local learning and from across the sector to ensure response procedures are safe and effective in order to meet new and foreseeable risks.	Throughout 2025-26 the Digital Learning Team have continued to deliver multiple interactive digital packages via the Learning Management System to meet the diverse training requirements of our staff. This new learning style and training delivery model has allowed all our operational staff to gain the valuable knowledge needed to identify risks and hazards and apply appropriate safe working practices laid out in the national operational guidance. We continued to deliver high-quality incident command training through a mix of classroom, practical and digital learning, including Cross-Border training days with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Effective Command videos are now embedded in Operational Training Programme packages, and both Acquisition and Revalidation training across all levels of incident command, focused on local risk has been provided. We have also introduced Incident Command Days to support shared learning and developed realistic risk-based training scenarios, based on trend analysis, to target development, providing new and existing incident commanders the opportunity to test their skills in a controlled environment. All of this learning has been tested through our exercising programme where themes of the exercises align not only with a national guidance but also risks identified within the CRMP 2025-30. This included exercises at a local, district and service level. Our Fleet and Equipment Steering Group (FESG) provides structured oversight of the equipment replacement programme. It ensures that, when equipment is due to be replaced, we consider new and emerging technologies alongside operational needs, safety requirements and value for money. FESG reviews options and user feedback, tests solutions where appropriate, and agrees specifications and procurement routes so that replacement equipment takes advantage of innovation and remains fit for purpose for our crews.

Response 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Major Incidents
We will collaborate with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners to prepare for Major incidents which go beyond routine operations and involve large-scale efforts. These events or situations may have serious consequences, which require specific arrangements from one or more emergency response agencies.	Throughout 2025-26, our officers and Emergency Planning Officer worked closely with the LRF, helping to develop plans and policies for major incidents linked to the National Risk Register. To further support the LRF our middle and senior leaders chair LRF groups to help drive joint work across the partnership. As a Service we have taken part in a range of LRF exercises at operational, tactical and strategic levels. These large-scale exercises have been delivered to test multi-agency response and alignment with JESIP principles. These have included Exercise Articulas Grand, simulating a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA); and Exercise Nightingale at the Alexandra Hospital which was delivered in collaboration with colleagues from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, the NHS, West Midlands Ambulance Service and West Mercia Police.
	Intelligence
We will review, update and share risk information at a local, regional and national level and ensure it is widely available to ensure Firefighter safety.	Our intelligence programme includes crews visiting higher risk sites to ensure they are fully aware of, and can plan for, the risks they pose, increasing Firefighter safety. Visits take place on a rolling annual basis so that risk information is accurate, up to date and readily available to staff when needed. We also share this information with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services for premises close to our border, through a two-way agreement. New information identified through our work in the community is flagged by operational crews and other departments through an integrated process, helping to ensure everyone is aware of emerging risks and hazards. We also receive risk information through the LRF, including risks raised via the Community and National Risk Registers. To support wider learning, we both share and receive information through national systems that capture lessons identified while carrying out duties, across the fire sector and other emergency services.

Response 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Command and Control	
We will embed the new Command and Control system to ensure best practice, call handling and resource deployment.	We are leading the introduction of a new Command and Control system across four Fire and Rescue Services. By using modern, proven technology, this system will improve how emergency calls are handled, helping crews respond more quickly. Ultimately, it will support a more efficient and resilient service for the public.



Protection 2025-26

Focusing on Excellence

The total number of fire safety inspections of complex premises completed by the Protection Department in 2025-6 was 1,103, exceeding their annual target of 1,000. Operational crews completed 356 inspections, which also exceeded their target of 350. In addition, building on the Promising Practice identified in the 2023 HMICFRS inspection report, our annual Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE) Inspections have increased from 39 to 139.

The Service has also continued to take proactive steps to reduce the number of false alarm calls generated by automatic fire alarms, which have been reduced by 24% (454) in 2025-26 through effective call filtering.

The Service introduced their 2025-30 Protection Strategy, which includes a focus on emerging issues such as Battery Energy Storage Systems, illegal waste sites and new fire safety legislation, such as introducing Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans. Effective performance management measures are in place, and the 2025-30 Protection Strategy includes new Key Performance Measures in areas such as responding to fire safety concerns, completing risk/intelligence based and post fire inspections, and meeting statutory deadlines e.g. building regulations, licencing and completing the national enforcement register.

Year in Numbers:

1,459
Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

494
Building Regulation Consultations

107
Enforcements (inc. Enforcements, Prohibitions and Alterations Notices)

292
Licensing Applications Completed

60
Fire Investigations

174
Post Fire Inspections

139
MATE Inspections

Protection 2025-26 continued

Delivering our Service Objectives

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Risk Based Inspection Programme	
We will deliver departmental and operational Risk Based Inspection Programme targets, including providing training and support to operational staff working towards Fire Safety qualifications.	The Protection department completed 1,103 Fire Safety Inspections in 2025-26, exceeding the Service target of 1,000. In addition, frontline operational staff, trained to the Level 3 Fire Safety standard, also completed 356 Fire Safety Inspections of less complex buildings, exceeding their target of 350 for 2025-26.
Fire Safety Compliance	
We will work proactively with businesses to ensure compliance, including the effective management of Enforcement and Prohibition Notices and the prompt and proportionate use of prosecution powers where necessary.	The Protection department continued to work proactively with businesses to identify and enforce proportionate fire safety measures in commercial buildings. Following completion of essential work by businesses, the Service were able to inspect and withdraw 48 Prohibition Notices, 20 Enforcement Notices and 5 Alterations Notices in 2025-26. In cases where compliance requirements had not been met the Service initiated court proceedings to hold businesses to account on public safety.
Promoting Fire Safety	
We will continue to engage with members of the public to offer advice and guidance to promote fire safety. This engagement also includes specific areas of focus, e.g. changes in fire safety legislation, new initiatives such as reducing unwanted fire signals and our response to national events, including the Grenfell Tower fire.	In 2025-26 we responded to fire safety concerns within 5 working days on 98% of occasions, exceeding our KPI target of 90%. Our 2025-30 Protection Strategy includes additional focus on new and emerging issues such as Battery Energy Storage Systems, illegal waste sites and new fire safety legislation, such as introducing Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans, and additional public and business safety advice has been added to our website. The Service have also reduced the number of false alarm calls generated by automatic fire alarms, by 24% (454) in 2025-26 through effective call filtering.

Protection 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Intelligence Based Inspections	
We will conduct a programme of fire safety inspections which target smaller and more vulnerable commercial premises where life may be at risk. These visits will be part of a joint inspection with partner enforcement agencies.	Acting on intelligence shared by partner agencies the Service has built on the Promising Practice identified in the 2023 HMICFRS inspection report and increased our annual Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement Inspections from 39 to 139. This led to a significant increase in fire safety Prohibition, Enforcement and prosecution activity to improve public safety.
Consultations	
We will maintain our proactive response to building regulations, licensing applications and Safety Advisory Groups. In addition, we will continue to engage with planners and developers in areas where we are non-statutory consultees, such as the installation of sprinklers in all high-risk buildings and battery energy storage sites.	The Service responded to statutory building regulations and licencing consultations within set timescales on 97% of occasions, exceeding our KPI of 90%. We also respond as a non-statutory consultee to significant applications, such as Battery Energy Storage Systems, promoting national guidance in areas such as water supplies, firefighting infrastructure, fire prevention and mitigation measures. In 2025-26 we also attended 42 Safety Advisory Groups, promoted fire safety compliance at large public events.
Ensuring we have the right skills	
In order to deliver the above objectives, we will need to maintain our current levels of skilled and experienced fire safety inspectors. To achieve this, we are training new inspectors through the apprenticeship scheme, alongside our continued professional development of our current staff.	Following on from our previous apprenticeship successes, we have employed an additional two Fire Safety Advisor / Inspector apprentices who are scheduled to complete their training in 2026. In addition, 56 frontline operational firefighters are now qualified to Level 3 Fire Safety Certificate standard, enabling them to deliver over 350 fire safety inspections each year. This has also helped firefighters identify and address fire safety concerns, manage operational risks and deal with commercial building fires.

Prevention 2025-26

Focusing on Excellence

We have continued to strengthen and develop all areas of our Prevention services, including the expansion of Your Impact, our road safety education programme aimed at reducing deaths and serious injuries among young drivers. In partnership with key stakeholders, we have also delivered targeted road safety interventions for other at-risk road users, including mature drivers and young people from additional high-risk groups.

The number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) completed exceeded the annual target, reaching 7,505, with approximately one third resulting from partner referrals. 93% of these visits were carried out in the homes of individuals identified as having vulnerabilities or other risk factors.

The Service has continued to review and enhance its Prevention evaluation programme, introducing additional Evaluation Frameworks for the Fire Safety Intervention Scheme and fire safety event attendance. This programme is routinely monitored and reviewed to evidence continuous improvement through quality assurance and evaluation of the effectiveness of our prevention activities.

Year in Numbers:

7,505
Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)

2,525
Partner Referrals

147
Safeguarding Referrals

31
Fire Safety Intervention Referrals (formerly Firesetters)

Prevention 2025-26 continued

Delivering our Service Objectives

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV)
We will deliver a comprehensive programme of HSFVs in people's homes, targeting those most at risk.	The Service completed 7,505 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs), exceeding the target of 7,500, with 2,500 referrals received from partner organisations. The Prevention team supported various local events to promote fire safety and to further enhance early identification and referral, we delivered fire safety awareness training to partner organisations and introduced a digital fire safety training package hosted on the Service website. This has improved partner knowledge and confidence in recognising fire risk and vulnerabilities and strengthened referral pathways. Using a combination of partner intelligence and internal risk data, we adopted a targeted, data led approach to deliver a comprehensive HFSV programme, prioritising individuals and areas at greatest risk of fire as set out in the Service's Definition of Risk for Dwelling Fires.
	Road Safety
We will provide education and risk reduction initiatives for young drivers and other at-risk road users alongside the work of multi-agency road safety partners.	We have collaborated with partner organisations to broaden the reach of the Your Impact road safety programme for Year 10 and 11 students. To maximise accessibility, we have developed a digital version of the programme, enabling online delivery and extending access to young people who are home educated. We record the Your Impact data by school terms from September to July. We are still in our reporting period for academic year 2025-26. To date we have delivered Your Impact to 3,187 Year 10 and 11 students across 35 schools. We have also increased flexibility for schools by offering both face to face and online delivery options, allowing the intervention to be tailored to local circumstances. This blended approach has strengthened partnership delivery, increased the number of students receiving road safety education, and ensured that the Service continues to provide consistent, high quality preventative input to as many young people as possible.

Prevention 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Community Education	
We will educate the community to reduce their risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies.	• We maintained a strong focus on engaging children and young people through prevention and early intervention activity. Working with partners, we actively promoted the Fire Safety Intervention Programme across our networks, strengthening referral pathways to enable the prompt identification and support of young people displaying firesetting behaviours. • We delivered a programme of prevention campaigns throughout the year, making increased use of digital technology to extend reach and improve the effectiveness of safety messaging. • We promoted the Staywise educational platform to ensure access to high quality, age appropriate safety education for young people up to 18, supporting longer term behaviour change and community safety.
Community Preparedness	
We will work with partners to ensure residents, businesses and visitors are prepared for, and are aware of the dangers of, extreme weather events such as more frequent wide-area flooding and longer-lasting heat waves.	• We worked collaboratively with partners to support coordinated planning and public engagement activity to raise awareness of the risks posed by severe weather and the actions residents, businesses and visitors can take to protect themselves and their property. • Targeted communications and joint prevention initiatives were used to promote timely, practical safety advice, while partner collaboration ensured consistent messaging and effective use of local intelligence. • We commenced a programme of carrying out targeted HFSVs in areas at risk of flooding to enhance community awareness and improve preparedness.

Prevention 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Water Safety
We will work alongside key stakeholders to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries in or around water by providing water safety advice and flooding awareness.	We strengthened our collaborative approach with key partners to support a sustained reduction in drowning risk across both counties. We contributed to and reinforced local, national and international water safety campaigns, ensuring consistent messaging around safe behaviours around water. We delivered a joint community event with partners during Drowning Prevention Week, highlighting the dangers of swimming in open water to young people and supported water-related campaigns. This enabled the delivery of tailored advice supporting long term risk reduction and improved community resilience.

Valuing our Workforce – People 2025-26

Focusing on Excellence

Everything we do is guided by the national Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. This helps ensure the services we deliver are professional, accessible and continue to maintain the trust and confidence of the communities we serve. Through our People Strategy, we place our people and our communities at the heart of everything we do. We strive to maintain a working environment where everyone feels valued, respected and able to reach their potential. We place a strong emphasis on supporting high performance and professional standards of behaviour as well as continuous training, development and learning, so our people can meet the evolving needs of the Service and our communities.

Year in Numbers:

Our People

The Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive with the support of the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB), made up of Directors and Assistant Directors. The Service employs 689 full-time and part-time members of staff, who work in 754 roles. Firefighters make up approximately 79% of the workforce, assisted by professional teams providing support and enabling services such as finance, human resources and legal services. The 28 Fire Control firefighters are the frontline for receiving emergency calls and deploying crews to incidents. There are also 20 active volunteers supporting community safety activities.

244
Wholetime Firefighters

351
On-Call Firefighters

28
Fire Control Firefighters

131
Support Staff

Valuing our Workforce – People 2025-26 continued

Gender Balance

The female – male ratio remains the same as the ratio recorded in March 2025.

21% Female

79% Male

Ethnic Minority Representation

Ethnic minority representation in the Service remains the same as the percentage recorded in March 2025.

10% Within the community*

6% Within the Service

* Census 2021

Staff Sickness

9.42

days / shifts were lost per person in 2025-26

↓11.1%

an decrease compared with 2024-25

Delivering our Service Objectives

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	People Strategy
We will continue to deliver our People Strategy to support the delivery of the Response, Protection and Prevention Strategies and the CRMP.	We developed a new People Strategy that recognises our people are central to achieving our 2030 vision for organisational excellence. It is through their collective contribution, talent and effort that we will successfully deliver our core organisational strategies.

Valuing our Workforce – People 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Development and Learning	
We will continue to invest in the development of our staff, regardless of role or leadership level, to be the best they can be in their current role or to support those seeking opportunities to progress in their career. To deliver this we will launch the Step Framework.	We launched a new Step Framework focused on unlocking the potential of all our staff. It aims to support every individual across the organisation, whether they are aspiring to progress into new roles or are content and thriving in their current position. It recognises that professional development is not solely about promotion but also about deepening expertise and enhancing skills, knowledge, and performance. The Step Framework provides tools and opportunities for all staff to grow, contribute meaningfully, and feel valued – wherever they are in their career journey.
Culture and Inclusion	
Our Culture & Ethics Steering Group will evolve into a Culture Board to more formally drive the Service's commitment to improve and foster an inclusive, safe culture in line with our Core Code of Ethics. A blended Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) maintenance programme is scheduled for delivery from 2025-28, to build on the previous Service-wide in-person training and to maintain momentum in increasing our understanding of EDI. We will collaborate with our staff and external specialists to develop a Diversity Framework. This evolving statement will adapt through regular discussions and challenges, guiding our teams on the importance of pursuing greater diversity and the changes required to achieve it.	We strengthened our focus on culture and ethics by setting up a Culture Board. This provides clearer leadership and governance in driving an inclusive, safe and respectful culture in line with the Core Code of Ethics. To maintain momentum in promoting high professional standards and behaviours, we launched the Respectful Workplace training programme. We also worked collaboratively with staff and external specialists to develop a Diversity Framework, which will continue to evolve and guide ongoing improvement across the Service.

Value for Money – Assets 2025-26

Focusing on Excellence

Over the past year, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has continued to strengthen its asset base to ensure it remains aligned with the priorities set out in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30. This has focused on maintaining a modern, resilient and sustainable infrastructure that supports safe, effective and efficient emergency response, prevention and protection activities.

During 2025-26, the Service reviewed and updated its Asset Management Strategy, extending its planning horizon to 2030. This ensures that our approach to managing property, fleet, equipment and ICT is forward-looking, evidence-based and directly aligned to the evolving risks identified within the CRMP. Supporting this, a suite of delivery plans covering Property, Fleet, Equipment, ICT and Environmental Sustainability has been refreshed, providing a clear and structured framework to maintain operational readiness while ensuring value for money.

A significant programme of equipment improvement has been delivered to enhance operational capability and firefighter safety. This has included the replacement of key firefighting equipment and the introduction of enhanced tools designed to support response to a broader range of incident types, including complex and high-risk environments. In addition, a Service-wide initiative has ensured that all locations are equipped with water first responder capability, strengthening resilience and consistency across the operational workforce. These developments directly

Value for Money – Assets 2025-26

support the CRMP priorities of competence and operational effectiveness, ensuring crews are well equipped to manage both current and emerging risks.

The Service has also made substantial progress in modernising its fleet to support both operational effectiveness and environmental sustainability. The fire engine replacement programme has advanced, with new appliances entering production for delivery in the coming year, ensuring that frontline resources remain reliable, fit for purpose and capable of responding to the demands of a modern fire and rescue service. Alongside this, improvements to the ancillary fleet, including the introduction of hybrid vehicles, are supporting a reduction in carbon emissions and running costs, contributing to the Service's broader sustainability objectives.

Investment in estate and facilities has further strengthened the Service's ability to deliver to communities. Key developments have included the refurbishment of existing fire stations and the progression of new-build facilities, ensuring that firefighters and support staff have access to safe, modern and inclusive working environments. These investments are essential to maintaining operational continuity and ensuring that infrastructure remains aligned to both current service requirements and future demand.

Collectively, these improvements demonstrate a clear commitment to delivering value for money while maintaining the assets, infrastructure and technological capability required to support frontline service delivery. By aligning asset investment with risk, demand and strategic priorities, the Service is ensuring that its resources remain resilient, adaptable and capable of supporting effective prevention, protection and response activities.

This approach reflects the core CRMP principle of using resources efficiently and effectively, ensuring that investment decisions are evidence-based, sustainable and focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the communities we serve both now and in the future.

Value for Money – Assets 2025-26 continued

Delivering our Service Objectives

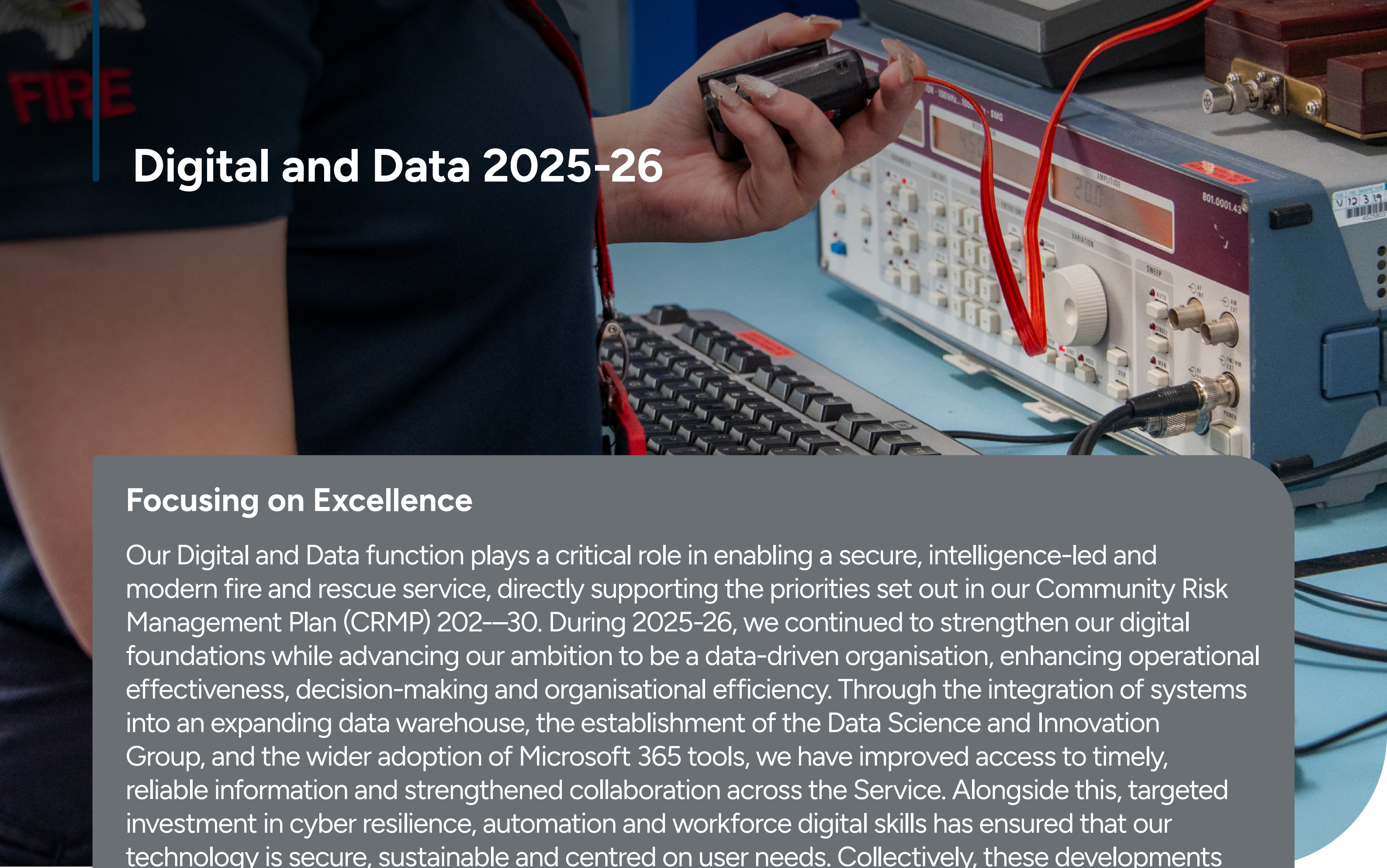
What we said we would do:	What we did:
Asset Management Plans	
We will ensure asset management plans meet Service needs, including the ICT infrastructure, buildings, equipment and fleet.	During 2025-26, the Service reviewed and updated its Asset Management Strategy, extending its planning horizon through to 2030. This work ensures that our approach to managing assets continues to align with operational and organisational needs, both now and in the future. Supporting this, five key delivery plans were refreshed, covering Property, Fleet, Equipment, ICT, and Environmental Sustainability. Together, these plans provide a clear and structured framework to ensure that our infrastructure, technology, and operational resources remain effective, resilient, and fit for purpose in supporting frontline service Response, Prevention and Protection activities. **Equipment:** During 2025–26, the Service successfully implemented a comprehensive equipment improvement programme. This included the replacement of Mainline and Hose Reel branches, alongside the targeted procurement and deployment of smooth bore branches to enhance operational response, particularly at high-rise fire incidents. A key achievement has been the completion of a Service-wide upskilling initiative, equipping all locations with water first responder capability. This was supported through the provision of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and associated resources, strengthening frontline resilience and response consistency. In addition, the Service has undertaken a full review of its Equipment Plan for the period 2026-2030. This ensures that the replacement of end-of-life equipment is clearly defined, prioritised, and aligned with the Mid-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), providing a robust and sustainable framework for future investment.

Value for Money – Assets 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Fleet: - Aligned with the Fleet Strategy 2021-2025, the Service has successfully completed the procurement phase of its fire engine replacement programme. This included the development of updated vehicle specifications and the establishment of effective routes to market. As a result, ten new fire engines have entered the build phase and are scheduled for delivery during 2026-27, marking a major step forward in modernising operational capability. - The Service has also made notable progress in enhancing its ancillary fleet. Through the planned replacement programme, Hyundai Tucson Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) have been introduced to replace existing station cars. This transition represents a significant advancement in supporting the Service's commitment to sustainability, operational efficiency, and community responsibility. The adoption of hybrid technology delivers clear benefits, including reduced fuel costs, lower carbon emissions, and improved air quality within the communities we serve. - Furthermore, the Fleet Plan for 2026–2030 has been reviewed and updated to ensure that vehicle replacement programmes are strategically aligned with the MTFP, reinforcing long-term affordability and operational readiness.

Value for Money – Assets 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
	Investment
- We will continue to invest in technological advances and other improvements in service delivery, facilities, equipment and training, where resources allow.	- Throughout 2025-26, the Service has continued to invest in its estate, facilities, and operational capability to enhance service delivery. This has included the progression of refurbishment works at Leintwardine Fire Station, improving facilities for our personnel and the communities they serve. - Significant progress has also been made on the new Hereford Fire Station, with construction now underway. To ensure operational continuity during this period, a temporary fire station has been successfully delivered and is in use by operational staff. - These investments demonstrate our ongoing commitment to modernising infrastructure, supporting our workforce, and delivering an effective and efficient emergency service.



Digital and Data 2025-26

Focusing on Excellence

Our Digital and Data function plays a critical role in enabling a secure, intelligence-led and modern fire and rescue service, directly supporting the priorities set out in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 202-–30. During 2025-26, we continued to strengthen our digital foundations while advancing our ambition to be a data-driven organisation, enhancing operational effectiveness, decision-making and organisational efficiency. Through the integration of systems into an expanding data warehouse, the establishment of the Data Science and Innovation Group, and the wider adoption of Microsoft 365 tools, we have improved access to timely, reliable information and strengthened collaboration across the Service. Alongside this, targeted investment in cyber resilience, automation and workforce digital skills has ensured that our technology is secure, sustainable and centred on user needs. Collectively, these developments support more informed, evidence-based decision-making and enable the Service to respond effectively to evolving risks while delivering high-quality, efficient services to our communities.

Delivering our Service Objectives

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Digital Transformation and Data	
During 2024-25, the ICT function focused on strengthening the Service's digital foundations while enabling innovation in a controlled and proportionate way. Artificial Intelligence capability has been made available to staff through Microsoft 365, enabling improved productivity, information handling and decision support within a secure and governed environment. Initial use has focused on practical productivity benefits rather than automation for its own sake.	Alongside this, the Service has begun to automate a range of previously manual and repetitive processes across departments. These activities are designed to improve efficiency, reduce administrative burden and allow staff to focus their time on higher-value activities that directly support prevention, protection and response functions. To support more evidence-led decision-making, a Data Science and Innovation Group has been established in partnership with the Performance and Information department. This group provides oversight and direction for the use of advanced analytics, data science and emerging digital capabilities, ensuring alignment with Service priorities and responsible use of data. The Service's Data Warehouse capability has also been further enhanced, integrating a growing number of core systems and datasets.

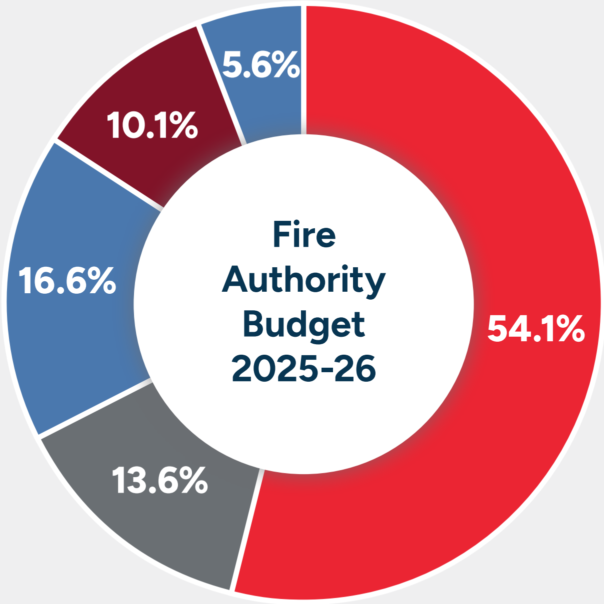
Digital and Data 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Cyber Security and Information Assurance	
Maintaining the confidentiality, integrity and availability of Service systems and data remains a fundamental priority. During 2024-25, significant progress was made in strengthening the Service's cyber security baseline. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is now in place across all core digital platforms, reducing the risk of unauthorised access.	Cyber security awareness training has been rolled out through the Learning Management System, ensuring all staff receive consistent training to help protect both the organisation and themselves online. These controls form part of a broader move towards a Zero Trust security model, where access is continuously verified and layered protections are applied by default. This activity has improved the Service's overall cyber resilience and provided increased confidence in the security of its modern digital workspace, while supporting compliance with information governance and data protection requirements.
Learning, Skills and Professional Development	
ICT delivery increasingly depends on specialist skills and in-house capability. During 2024-25, targeted professional development was provided to ICT staff to strengthen capability in key areas including Microsoft 365, device management, Power BI, SQL and modern device deployment using Autopilot. This investment has reduced dependency on external support, improved system resilience and enhanced the quality and timeliness of management reporting.	Training has not been limited to technical delivery alone. ICT has worked with other departments to ensure that new tools and platforms are supported by appropriate guidance and knowledge transfer, enabling staff to use digital solutions with confidence.

Digital and Data 2025-26 continued

What we said we would do:	What we did:
Collaboration, Communication and the Modern Workplace	
A key milestone during 2024-25 was the continued embedding of Microsoft 365 as the Service's core collaboration and communications platform. All staff now have access to modern digital tools, supported by the full rollout of personal-issue devices, we have achieved a full one to one digital device issue ensuring consistent access to systems and information regardless of role or location.	These changes have improved accessibility, supported flexible and hybrid ways of working, and strengthened collaboration between teams and departments. The modern workplace environment underpins operational, corporate and support functions, providing a consistent and secure digital experience for staff across the Service irrespective of their geo location.
Data, Insight and Analytics	
The Service has continued to invest in strengthening its data and analytics capability. During 2024-25, additional systems and datasets were integrated into the Data Warehouse, providing a single, consistent source of data to support reporting, analysis, and insight. This capability has improved visibility of activity, performance, and emerging trends across the organisation, helping teams to better understand demand, outcomes, and risk.	To provide strategic oversight and direction, the Data Science and Innovation Group plays a key role in guiding the responsible use of data, advanced analytics, and emerging technologies, ensuring that insight activity is aligned to Service priorities and focused on delivering practical value rather than technical complexity. Access to reliable and timely data is critical to effective planning, resource allocation, and service improvement. Progress made during the year represents a significant step towards more consistent, evidence-led and data-driven decision making across the Service.

Finance 2025-26



£24.2m – Uniform Staff	
£6.1m – Support Staff	
£7.4m – Fleet, Equipment, ICT and Property	
£4.5m – Fixed Costs	
£2.5m – Other	

How the Service was funded

H&W Council Tax	£30.3m
Funding Grants	£9.0m
Business Rates, etc.	£3.2m
Special Grants	£2.2m
Reserves	–
	£44.7m

The annual Band D Council Tax was £102.22 or less than 29 pence per day.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
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FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

HWFire

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