



Core Strategy

Response Strategy 2021-25

1 July 2021 to 31 March 2025



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Contents

Foreword	1
Our Purpose, Vision and Mission	2
Who We Are: Response	3
Our Ethical Principles	4
Introduction	5
Principles	5
Response	6
Availability	7
Competence	9
Intelligence	10
CRMP 2021-25: Core aims for Response	12
Legislative Requirements	13
Monitoring and Review	15

Foreword

This document sets out the headline objectives of the Response Strategy. The strategy is one of three Core Strategies designed to outline how the strategic aims of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) will be delivered through our Response, Protection and Prevention services. Alongside the CRMP, the Core Strategies drive everything we do, and underpin our mission of delivering high quality and sustainable services to our communities.

The Response Strategy aims to give clarity and direction on how we will deliver our emergency response services across our counties. Response forms the largest part of our Service, with most of our people, assets and finance being directed in this area. It would also be realistic to say that this is the most visible part of the Service to our communities, and an area where public expectation is at an all-time high.

Response is also the area of highest exposure, in terms of risk to our communities and staff, of coming to harm. It is therefore wholly appropriate that we set out clearly in this strategy how we will ensure our staff are fully prepared and ready to respond to help our communities in their time of need. The Protection and Prevention Strategies aim to make those times of need as infrequent as possible; however, we must always be ready to respond and deploy whenever we are needed.

To achieve this you will see some key themes in this strategy which will help us drive our daily activities to all achieve this. We will also strive not only to focus on the actual response but ensure we aim for excellence before the incident, when we mobilise, and when we return from incidents seeking to improve and learn at every stage.

Above all else, we will endeavour to readily deploy the right asset, as quickly as possible, with the most competent and highly skilled staff we can, and have a resilient and flexible model of delivery that can meet the wide ranging breadth of incidents and risks we are required to face, from fires and road traffic collisions to hazardous materials and wide scale flooding, but to name a few.

In delivering our response services over the next four years, our work will aim to align with the various response standards introduced by the [Fire Standards Board](#), which include operational competence, operational learning, operational preparedness and emergency response driving. The strategy also sets out how we will support our overarching core purpose, vision and mission, and will be guided by the [NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#).

As a living document, the strategy must remain agile and flexible to be able to respond to the changing needs of our local communities, our workforce and other circumstances as necessary. We will maintain this through continual monitoring and review of all aspects of the strategy.



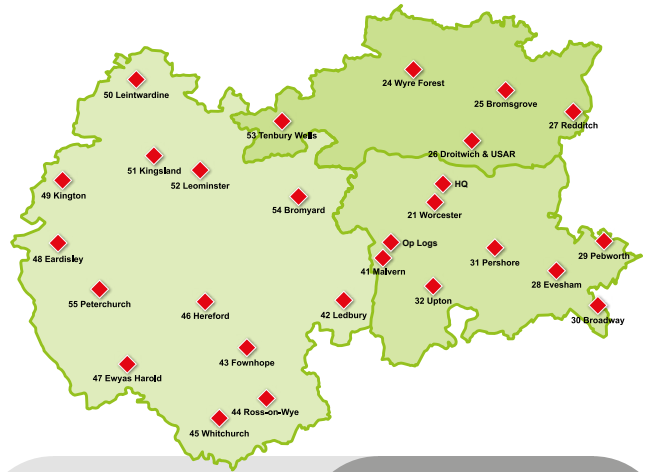
Jonathon Pryce

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Our Purpose, Vision and Mission

Who We Are

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) works to keep people safe from fire and other risks. We employ over 690 full-time and part-time members of staff in 770 roles, delivering a wide range of prevention, protection and emergency response services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire (an area of 392,000 hectares with a population of over 790,000 people).



25
Fire Stations



41
Fire Engines



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

Saving More Lives: 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.

251
Wholetime Firefighters



368
On-Call Firefighters



24
Fire Control Firefighters



127
Support Staff



In 2021-22 our Firefighter Control service dealt with over 16,000 calls and we attended over 7,400 incidents, including property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues, collapsed structures, hazardous materials and animal rescues (an average of about 142 incidents every week).



16,212
Calls to Firefighter Control



7,419
Incidents attended



1,605
Fires



2,385
Special Service Incidents



3,429
False Alarms

Our core purpose, vision and mission guide us in our work to make the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer. To do this effectively we need to ensure we understand and appreciate the diversity of the communities we serve, and have a workforce that is inclusive and fully represents and understands those communities.

Who We Are

Response

Central to our Response capability is our well-trained and highly skilled firefighter workforce. Together with our Firefighter Control team, who answer emergency calls and alert fire stations about incidents, our Wholetime and On-Call firefighters represent about 84% of the total Service workforce.

Our 25 fire stations are staffed by a mix of Wholetime firefighters – operating on a full-time basis and providing an immediate response – and On-Call firefighters who work and live in their local communities and respond to emergency calls whenever they are needed, usually mobilising within six minutes of receiving a call. All our fire stations can respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Some stations are crewed by Wholetime firefighters as well as On-Call colleagues.

We also have Support teams in our corporate areas such as ICT, HR & Development and Payroll, Training, Operational Logistics and Finance, without whom we could not provide a Response function.

This Response Strategy sets out our plans for the next four years towards achieving our overarching Core Purpose, Vision and Mission and our work will be guided by the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services.



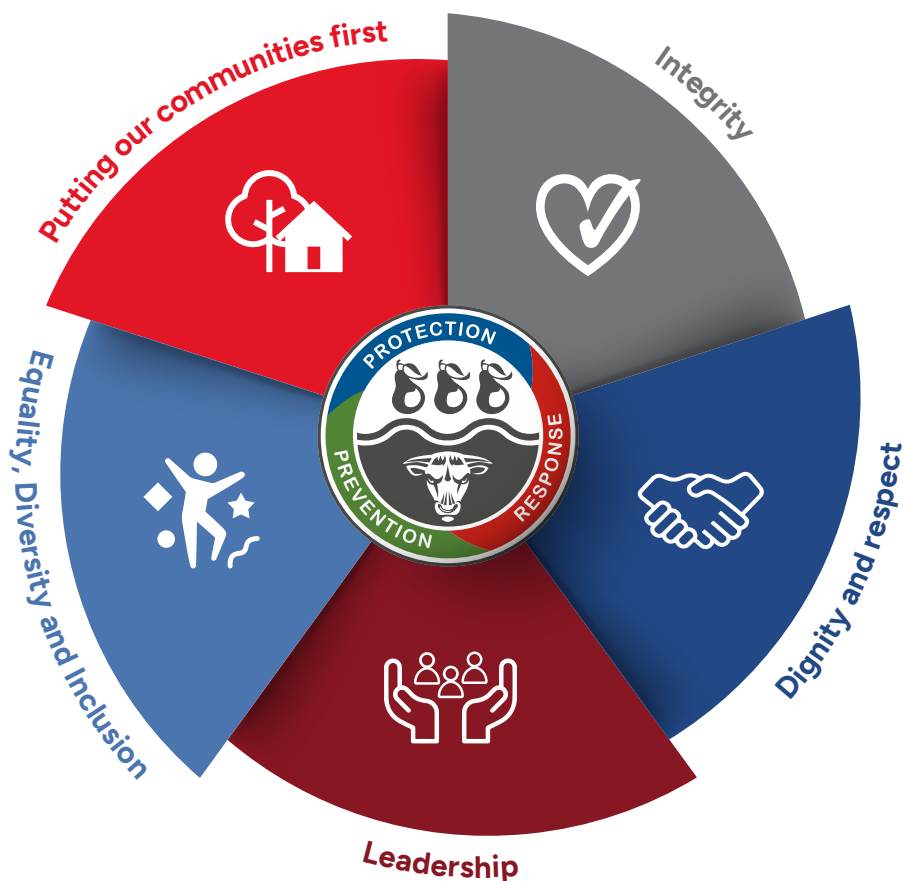
Our Ethical Principles



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



How we deliver our services to achieve our core purpose is guided by the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#) in England, which has been jointly developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. The Code sets out five ethical principles, which provide the basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. By adopting the Code as our guiding set of values, we are committed to championing ethical behaviours that help to improve organisational culture and workforce diversity, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.



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.

Introduction

In line with statutory responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order 2007 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) is committed to providing a range of response capabilities to ensure it is able to deal with the full range of emergencies and incidents that it could reasonably be expected to attend.

In order to achieve this response capability, HWFRS will maintain a fleet of vehicles, systems and equipment to meet these expectations and also ensure that staff are trained to use them, and prepare effectively to resolve all incidents in the circumstances that they would reasonably be expected to operate in. Our response work is designed to deliver the CRMP aims of responding to and dealing with fires and other emergencies promptly, safely and effectively. Our response activities are also guided by the various response standards introduced by the Fire Standards Board, which currently include Operational Competence, Operational Learning, Operational Preparedness and Emergency Response Driving.



Principles

The main principle behind HWFRS's **Response Strategy** will be to mobilise the most appropriate resources to an incident taking into account the incident type and the potential risks that may be known or suspected, and we will endeavour to arrive as promptly and safely as possible. The determination of the resources mobilised will be based on having the appropriate capability to be able to deal with the immediate risk, stabilise the incident and bring it to a satisfactory and safe conclusion, which may require additional resources or strategically located specialist resources.

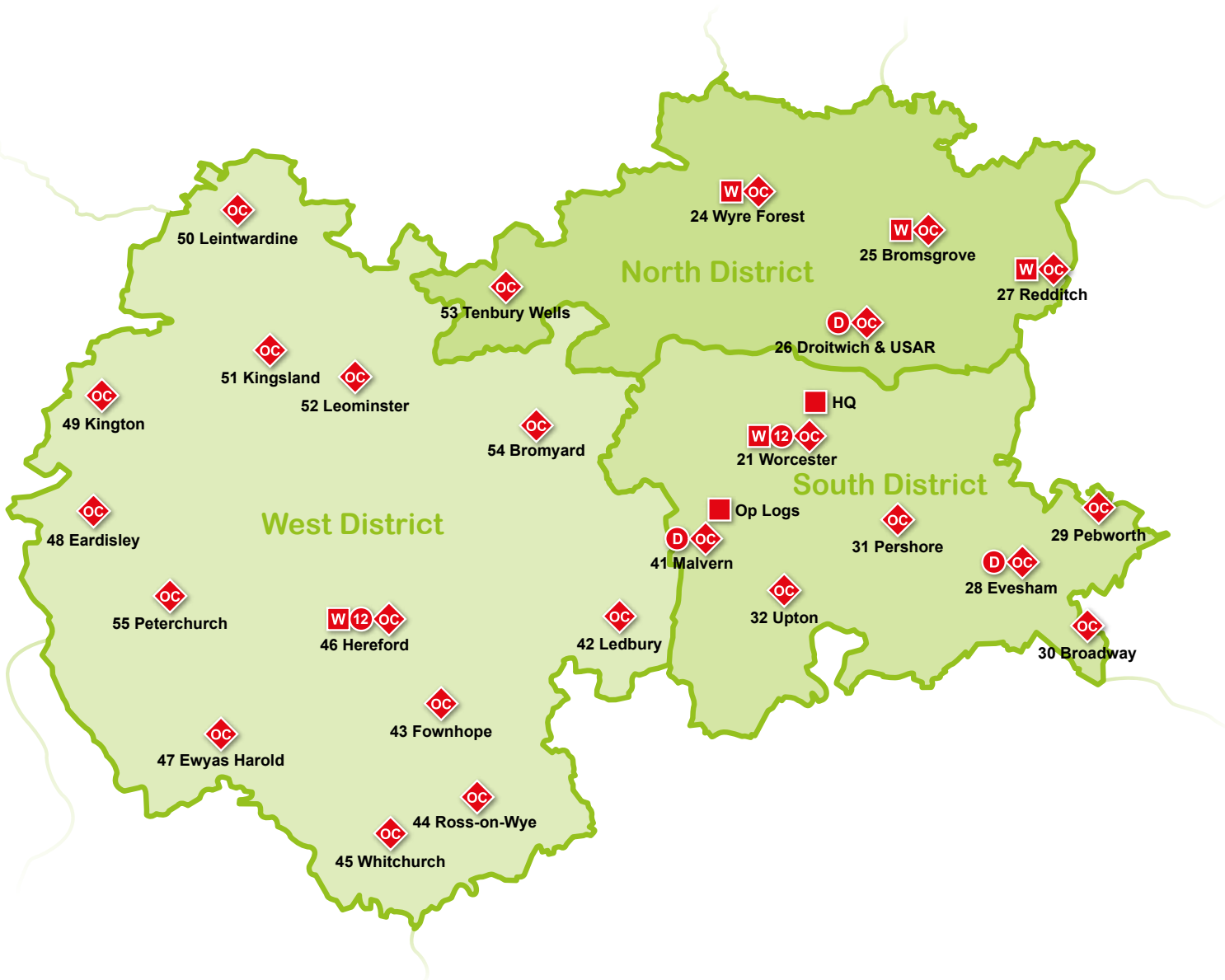
The most appropriate initial resource, often known as the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA), will normally be mobilised by Firefighter Control based on the information available to them at the time of the emergency call; however our Control team will use their skills, experience and professional judgement to ensure the right assets are deployed at the right time. All resources will usually be mobilised at the discretion of the Incident Commander (IC) in line with their risk assessment and operational plan.

In order to achieve correct mobilisation, HWFRS will continue to develop a response model that allows the mobilisation of a range of vehicles, equipment and personnel in the most flexible way. This more flexible response model will not be based solely on the mobilisation of fire appliances in the traditional way, but on the capabilities and personnel required to, firstly, make a lifesaving intervention and, secondly, to bring the incident to a satisfactory conclusion.

Response

The core foundations in delivering this strategy are **Availability, Competence** and **Intelligence**. In other words, we will have the right assets available at the right time, with suitably trained and competent staff to respond safely, with the right level of information available for them to deal with any foreseeable risks.

The three Service Districts will deliver this strategy by supporting and engaging with other functions, departments and strategies to enable HWFRS to respond efficiently and effectively to incidents and other emergencies based on availability and strategic fire cover.



D Day Crewed

W Wholetime

HQ: Service Headquarters

12 12hr Day Staffed

OC On-Call

Ops Logs: Operational Logistics Centre

Availability

Employees' availability to respond is a core aspect in delivering this Response Strategy. Having the right people, with the right skills, at the right time enables the delivery of high quality services and ensures we can respond efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

Internal systems will be maintained to monitor and ensure the availability of physical assets and staff to support the deployment of all operational resources. Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) systems will in the future link everything together to provide a real-time view of our assets, people and responding vehicles linked to our Firefighter Control systems to enable the correct response on each and every occasion.



Whilst the most immediate response is usually available unless deployed elsewhere, and staffing can generally be predicted using real-time systems, it still requires a degree of management to maintain it to a high level and we recognise the ongoing challenges of managing On-Call availability.

On-Call staff account for 82% of our fire engine and specialist response assets (dependent on time of day or night). It is therefore important that the Service not only manages this to optimise levels of availability of our On-Call assets, but that we invest and innovate across all operational areas to ensure we have the right systems and crewing models in place for the future. To support our own assets, we monitor neighbouring assets for mutual operational assistance via Section 13/16 agreements along with support from the voluntary sector, for example Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), West Mercia Search And Rescue (WMSAR) and the Red Cross.

Availability (continued)

HWFRS also plays a wider role in supporting National Resilience capabilities through the [National Coordination Advisory Framework \(NCAF\)](#) Electronic Support System (ESS).

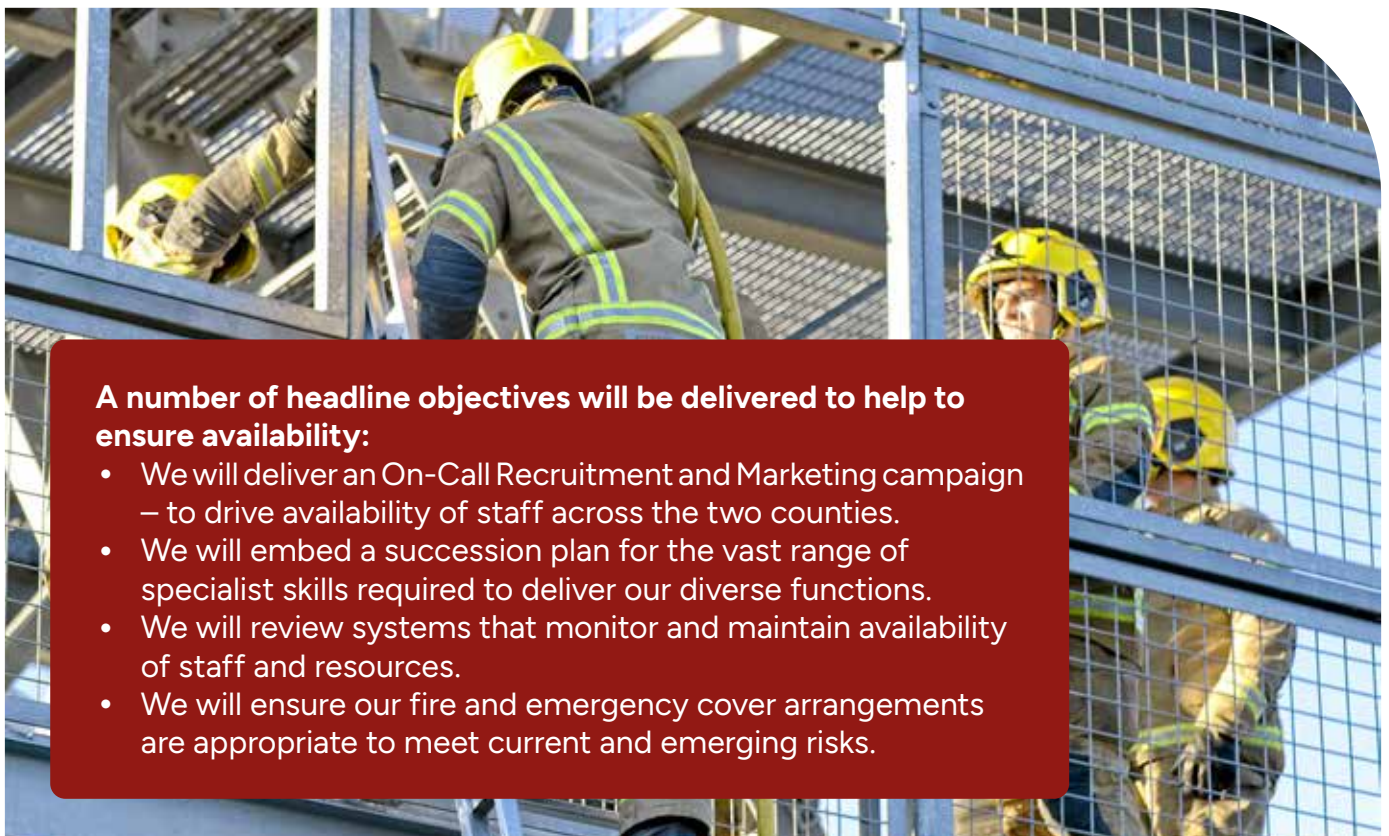
Incident Command and Control underpins [firefighter safety](#). Therefore, we will ensure professional and highly skilled Operational Commanders are available to lead and resolve all incident types ranging from **Level 1** to **Level 4**:

- Level 1 – Initial Bronze (Crew and Watch Commanders)
- Level 2 – Intermediate Silver (Station Commanders)
- Level 3 – Advanced Silver (Group Commanders)
- Level 4 – Strategic Gold (Area Commanders and Principal Officers)

Where specialist skills are needed, HWFRS will provide these skills internally or, where appropriate, may enter into Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with other services to ensure the relevant specialist advice and support is made available.

The availability of specialist skills will be monitored and maintained, in particular those delivered by Level 2 and 3 Incident Commanders:

- National Interagency Liaison Officers
- Specialist Accident Investigation Officers
- Hazardous Materials Officers
- Fire Investigation Officers
- Fire Safety / Protection Officers
- National Resilience Tactical Advisors (Urban Search And Rescue, High Volume Pump, Wildfires, Flood, etc.)



A number of headline objectives will be delivered to help to ensure availability:

- We will deliver an On-Call Recruitment and Marketing campaign – to drive availability of staff across the two counties.
- We will embed a succession plan for the vast range of specialist skills required to deliver our diverse functions.
- We will review systems that monitor and maintain availability of staff and resources.
- We will ensure our fire and emergency cover arrangements are appropriate to meet current and emerging risks.

Competence

Competence refers to the proficiency of an employee to efficiently carry out their role/job. It encompasses a combination of knowledge, experience, skills and attitude to continually improve performance. We will ensure all aspects of Response activity are underpinned by staff training as well as ensuring staff receive high quality training at state-of-the-art training facilities. This ensures they are not only merely competent, but have ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Ultimately, with this investment, they will become experts in their field supporting the Service's aim of achieving Organisational Excellence. To achieve this we will become a better 'Learning Organisation' and build a model based on operational excellence in all areas of Response. We will debrief operational incidents following exercising, training, incidents, near misses, etc. Information gained through working with our staff, communities and partners will influence new equipment, policy, response procedures and future training, enabling HWFRS to continuously improve.

The key to capturing interoperability and national capabilities lessons is through single Service and multi-agency debriefs. This process is captured through Joint Operational Learning (JOL), and accessed via [Resilience Direct](#) (Note: you will need to be a registered user to gain access). Operational training for all incident types can be broadly grouped as follows:

- **Tasks** needed to resolve operational incidents using the equipment provided within the parameters of HWFRS guidance and procedures.
- **Supervision** of responding employees – Incident Command, Levels 1 to 4.
- **Supervision** and interaction with other responding agencies (Cat1&2 responders) – [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#).
- **Knowledge** – technical input delivered through ICT training systems.
- **Learning** – debriefs from operational incidents, National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Operational Learning (JOL).



Intelligence

Operational Risk Information (or 'Intel' as it is known), is at the heart of our Intel programme; however Intel is more than just this system. When we refer to Intel we are referring not only to the information we hold on risks, but also to all the information and guidance held elsewhere (such as National Operational Guidance), and most importantly the skills and experience of operational crews and Commanders in how they apply this information. Intel centres around our staff using all the available information at their disposal and applying their local knowledge, training and experience to make command decisions that lead to the successful and safe resolution of an incident.

Intel is the combination of technical knowledge (such as competence in building construction or Fire Safety training) and the Intel Inspection programme of known risks, alongside informal local knowledge of risks and familiarity with the communities we work within. To be successful at Intel in the broader sense requires operational staff to have an 'enquiring mind' and have the desire to grow and develop their professional understanding of the risks within the fabric of the built environment within our communities, not just limited to potential fires, but also water and road risk, for example.



Our Intel system provides robust yet flexible guidance on developing and maintaining a consistent approach to managing, processing and using strategic and tactical operational risk information that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of all operational incidents.

Section 7(2)d of the Fire Services Act places a responsibility on the Authority to make arrangements for obtaining information needed for that purpose. Sections 8(2)d, and 9(3) d place a similar responsibility on the Authority in respect of road accidents and other emergencies. In support of these legislative responsibilities, the Fire and Rescue National Framework places a requirement on all Authorities to have in place effective arrangements for gathering risk information and making it readily available to operational crews.

To ensure this responsibility is achieved, HWFRS will ensure staff have the right skills to be able to evaluate risks and will provide a mechanism, and criteria, to gather and process risk information; it will:

- Identify local sites and their risks
- Gain local specialist advice from partner agencies and other organisations
- Consider including salvage and / or disaster plans
- Ensure that familiarisation visits and exercises involving such premises or sites are carried out
- Produce suitable templates to record and capture the relevant information
- Establish a delivery method to present the information in a clear and timely manner
- Schedule reviews and audits for the validity and accuracy of such information
- Embed a quality assurance programme
- Ensure information is made available to operational personnel to help successfully plan for, and resolve, operational incidents
- Identify specific operational knowledge, skills and understanding, which may need to be incorporated into local training plans

A headline objective will be delivered to support the Intel function:

- We will carry out and deliver a comprehensive end to end review of the Intel process, along with the Information Technology software systems needed to ensure Intel remains up to date, in line with National Operational Guidance, providing high quality tactical plans at operational incidents for risk identified within the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

CRMP 2021-25

Core aims for Response

Response

Responding to and dealing with fires and other emergencies promptly, safely and effectively



Our aims	What we will do to achieve our aims
Provide a prompt, safe and effective response to fires and other emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continually review fire and emergency cover to ensure appropriate provision of resources and crewing arrangements.Continually monitor firefighter availability to ensure capacity and resilience across the Service area.
Ensure fire and emergency cover arrangements are appropriate to meet current and emerging risk levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review, update and share risk information at a local, regional and national level and ensure it is widely available.Consider a joint attendance standard with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service based on incident type and location.
Ensure firefighters are well trained, well equipped and well led	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain a full complement of training, exercising and fitness to ensure ongoing competence, leadership and specialisms.Ensure firefighters have access to the most up-to-date personal protective equipment and state-of-the-art firefighting equipment and fire engines.
Prepare and plan for emergencies to be able to respond effectively and safely for the public, firefighters and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review and refresh operational procedures to align with National Operational Guidance, sharing learning locally and across the sector to ensure response procedures are safe and effective.Ensure the Service is able to proactively intervene when extreme weather is expected in order to reduce the impact.Develop further capabilities to respond effectively to the growing environmental impact of climate change – e.g. flooding, wildfire.
Work with partners to deliver shared response opportunities and assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work collaboratively with partners to support incidents other than fire and contribute towards ensuring a positive impact on our local communities.Develop capabilities to further enhance our coordinated response to large-scale or multi-agency incidents.Work with partners to assist individuals and communities to recover from the impacts of fires and other emergencies.

Legislative Requirements

There are a number of statutory functions and duties that we must carry out according to law (core legislation summarised below).

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This is the [core legislation](#) for all fire and rescue services and it details the legal powers and responsibilities of Fire Authorities. A key element of the Act is that it makes the production of a National Framework document by the Secretary of State mandatory. Fire Authorities must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions.



Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The [National Framework document](#) sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the fire and rescue service. It states:

- The Government's expectations for the fire and rescue service.
- What Fire Authorities are expected to do.
- The support the Government will provide in helping them meet these objectives.

The Framework is intended to be strategic and provides the foundation on which to build local solutions, giving Fire Authorities flexibility to meet the needs of their communities.

Legislative Requirements (continued)

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

This [Act](#) is a key piece of legislation and arose in response to the terrorist threat, as well as a number of other civil emergencies. It imposes a series of duties on local bodies (known as Category 1 Responders) including a requirement to assess the risk of an emergency occurring and to maintain plans for responding to an emergency.

The fire and rescue service is a Category 1 Responder.

The Act also creates a broader concept of an emergency.

To satisfy this legislation, the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum has been established. As a member of this Forum, HWFRS must maintain effective multi-agency arrangements for major emergencies and minimise the impact of those emergencies on the public, property and environment.

HWFRS is also part of the national [Resilience Capabilities Programme](#), which means we provide specialist support around the country in the event of a national emergency. Within HWFRS this consists of High Volume Pumping Units and an Urban Search and Rescue Team. The assets form part of the Service's day to day response function and also support the National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents outside the provision of normal Section 13/16 agreements. In support of this, staff will contribute to the future needs of HWFRS through the National Resilience frameworks to ensure the right assets are always available to meet the developing risk both internally and externally.

Further Information can be found in the [National Coordination and Advisory Framework](#).



Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

The headline objectives set out in this strategy are measurable. Therefore, we are able to continually monitor relevant information to make sure they will be delivered to support this Response Strategy. Monitoring progress in implementing the headline objectives will also enable us to understand how the strategy is being used and to be fully informed of progress made.

Review

Alongside monitoring, we will review the headline objectives of the Response Strategy. The review will be informed by the monitoring and will enable us to identify subsequent actions which may need to be carried out to ensure the headline objectives are delivered within the strategy period. The first review will be carried out no later than one year from the publication of the strategy and will then be reviewed on an annual basis.

The monitoring and review of this strategy will be reported in the Annual Service Review.

We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of our protection activities through a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) taking in to account seasonal variations and trends. Examples of KPIs include:

- The average call handling time.
- The time taken for Whole Time staff to book mobile to an incident.
- The time taken for an On Call crew to book mobile to an incident.
- The time taken for a Fire Appliance to arrive at scene.

Key Performance Indicators will be regularly reviewed in Service Performance Reports.





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