

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 28th September 2017

Subject: Operational Update

Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

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For: Information

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in respect of key operational developments that have occurred during this calendar year to date.

2. Recommendations

1. The CFA is requested to note the contents of this report.

3. Executive Summary

A number of quite significant operational matters have impacted the Service in the calendar year to date. This report sets out the progress; or otherwise, that has been achieved in relation to these matters and provides an overview of the current operational position. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:

1. An update in relation to the delivery of key corporate and integrated risk management planning (IRMP) objectives;
2. An update in response to the Grenfell tower block tragedy;
3. An update in relation to wholetime firefighter recruitment and appointment;
4. An update in relation to firefighter pay negotiations; and,
5. An update in relation to operational activity levels.

4. Report Detail

4.1 Update – Delivery of Corporate and IRMP Objectives

Significant progress has been achieved in delivering the key corporate and IRMP service improvement objectives that the CFA have previously agreed. By way of a summary, set out below are the main aspects that have been; or are about to be delivered/implemented:

- The upgrade of duty systems from on-call to incorporate wholetime day-crewing status at Market Harborough fire and rescue station has been

achieved ahead of schedule;

- The upgrade of duty systems from on-call to incorporate wholetime day-crewing status at Lutterworth fire and rescue station will be activated on October 1st 2017. This is slightly behind schedule due to recruitment issues.
- The change of duty system from wholetime regular to wholetime day-crewing plus status at Wigston fire and rescue station has been achieved ahead of schedule;
- The rollout of Tactical Response Vehicles (TRV) to replace the second fire engines at Loughborough, Market Harborough, Melton, Coalville and Oakham fire and rescue stations is progressing well. The first TRV has been deployed to Loughborough and has been operational since August. The remaining four TRVs will be deployed by the end of October 2017. This is slightly behind schedule due to engineering issues that have had to be addressed;
- The reviews of management, fleet and estate arrangements have been completed and the vast majority of the improvement objectives have now been implemented. Full implementation of the improvement objectives are on schedule;
- The development of Coalville fire and rescue station so that it becomes a 'bluelight' hub for fire, police and ambulance is well progressed into the building phase. It is anticipated that the new facility will be operationally active in December 2017 which is slightly behind schedule; and,
- The Braunstone Blues multi-agency partnership is delivering significant benefits to local communities and plans are now being developed to expand the operating principles across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

All other corporate and IRMP service improvement objectives are on track for completion within the defined timescales.

4.2 Update – Response to Grenfell Tower Block Tragedy

Following the tragic fire at the Grenfell tower block in June 2017, there has been a national focus on the safety of high-rise buildings. In the immediate aftermath of the fire, it was identified that the response to Government and public concerns could only be managed via a multi-agency approach.

Our priorities in response to this tragic fire have remained consistent and they are:

- To confirm that all 'rise' buildings are safe and fit for the purpose they are being used for; and
- To provide public reassurance and advice about safety concerns.

A fire safety audit programme supported by a public and community safety support package was very quickly developed and this now forms the basis of the multi-agency high-rise response strategy. To date, the following actions have been implemented:

Priority 1: To address all of the concerns as they apply to buildings that

consist of 8 or more floors.

We have identified 61 premises across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that are categorised as high-rise (over 8 floors). 56 of these premises are utilised for residential accommodation and we completed our planned regulatory audit and inspection/community safety programme on all of these premises by the end of July 2017. Although we did identify a number of very minor concerns that are being addressed, only 1 building has received a prohibition notice to restrict the use of one of the floors.

Priority 2: To address all of the concerns as they apply to buildings that consist of 5 to 7 floors.

We have identified 275 premises across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that fall within this category ('medium-rise'). Fire Protection officers have undertaken a fully documented risk assessment and 118 of the buildings have been categorised as warranting a full regulatory audit and inspection. At the time of writing this report, more than 40 full audits have been completed with the remainder planned to be completed by the end of October 2017.

Priority 3: To address all of the concerns as they apply to buildings that consist of up to 4 floors.

The premises that will fall into the Priority 3 work schedule is going to be significant and at this time we cannot confirm the approximate number. We categorise these buildings as 'low-rise' (up to 4 floors). A decision has been made to undertake a regulatory audit and inspection of these premises only if a vulnerability issue is identified. This will involve the Service working closely with our partners and utilising a seconded officer that is currently working in the multi-agency Integrated Vulnerable Management team.

Community Safety Initiatives

We have carried out public and community safety events at more than 40 premises across Leicester and Leicestershire, delivering community safety advice to over 1000 residents of 'rise' buildings.

With the imminent commencement of the University academic year, crews are starting a programme of delivering community safety advice to students who will be residing in 'rise' buildings.

4.3 Progress Update – Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Following an extensive and very exacting 7 month firefighter recruitment campaign, 25 recruit firefighters commenced their employment with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service on 11th September 2017. The 25 new recruits represent the first new intake of wholetime operational staff for just over 5 years and will now be subject to a 9 week period of initial training.

The training will be provided by the Fire Service College and upon completion, the new firefighters will be posted to their first fire stations. During the next 2 years, each person will be subject to a 'carousel' development programme whereby they will:

- Serve at 3 different fire stations that operate with different levels of resource provision including different duty systems; and,

- Be subject to a 12 week block placement in specialist operational support teams in order to get a much broader understanding of how the mechanics of the prevention, protection and operational planning functions contribute to frontline service delivery.

The new recruits will take up their initial postings just before Christmas 2017.

4.4 Update – Firefighter Pay Negotiations 2017

On 13th September the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) notified the National Joint Council (NJC) employer's representatives that following consultation with the membership, they were formally rejecting the offer of a 2% pay increase for 2017. In addition to this, the FBU have also notified the NJC that they have instructed their members to cease all participation in Emergency Medical Response (EMR) pilots as of 18th September.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is currently participating in an EMR pilot along with the other fire and rescue services in the East Midlands. At the time of writing this report, the detailed impact of the instruction to cease participation by members of the FBU is unknown and a further update will be provided during the CFA meeting.

4.5 Update – Operational Activity Levels

Performance against the vast majority of operational targets is broadly in line with expectation for the period 2017/18. The exceptions fall into the categories of anti-social behaviour and criminality and include deliberate primary and secondary fires. The sub-categories consist of fires in the open and fires involving motor vehicles. Officers are working closely with partners in Joint Action Groups (JAGs) to address the increases in deliberate firesetting.

There have been two recent fires in domestic premises to note. One involved a fire in the Leicestershire County Council area that resulted in one occupant receiving severe burns. The second incident occurred in the Leicester City area and this fire resulted in the tragic death of the occupant. Both incidents have been subject to detailed fire investigation by fire and police officers. In addition, fire officers have carried out extensive post-incident response activities in both areas in order to raise public and community awareness of safety considerations.

National fire statistics have been produced for the period 2016/17 and this demonstrates that in terms of the percentage change (from the previous 12 months) Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has performed better than the national average against:

- Primary fires (the national change was a slight increase, we reduced by 3.17%)
- Deliberate primary fires (we experienced an increase of 5% but the national average was an increase of nearly 14%)

However; Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service performed worse than the national average change against:

- Secondary fires (average was a 2% reduction, we increased slightly)
- Accidental Dwelling Fires (ours increased by over 3%, the national

average was 4% reduction)

- Deliberate secondary fires (an increase of 5%, the national average was a small reduction)
- Fatalities (we stayed the same where nationally there was a 14% reduction)

Secondary fires demonstrate a good and steady reduction. Fatalities are reasonably consistent in terms of very little change on a year on year basis.

In terms of performance during the last 7 years, overall trends are down but Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is currently on the rising part of a curve having had steady (but relatively small) increases over the past few years. Further work to determine an appropriate response to this information will be completed by the end of this calendar year.

5. Report Implications/Impact

Legal

None identified.

5.1 Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

5.2 Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

None arising from this report.

5.3 Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

None arising from this report.

5.3 Environmental

None identified

5.4 *Impact upon Our Plan Objectives*

The matters set out in this report inform the progress that has been achieved in delivering the key corporate and IRMP service improvement objectives that the CFA have previously agreed.

6. Background Papers

None.

7. Appendices

None.