

LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

Status of Report:	Public	Agenda Item:	11
Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Date:	18th March 2015		
Subject:	Role and Work of the Community Safety Education Team		
Report by:	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer		
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For:	Discussion		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed summary of the role and work that members of the Community Safety Education Team are involved in.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following a comprehensive review of strategic capacity to deliver the community safety agenda across the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) area, a decision was made by the CFA in 2004 to appoint specialist non-operational experts who subsequently formed the Community Safety Education Team.
- 2.2 The Team currently consists of 13 members of staff. 6 are employed on a full-time basis and 7 are employed on a part-time basis. The total staffing count equates to 9.5 full time equivalent (fte) employees.
- 2.3 The role of this Team has developed over the years and part of the evolution has been the decentralisation of management arrangements so that they are able to work much more closely with fire and rescue stations and geographical districts to deliver the community priorities that they identify.
- 2.4 The main activities that the Team are involved include:
 - Delivery of the Schools Education Initiative across all communities.
 - Delivery of the Home Fire Safety Check Initiative across all communities (targeted towards the most vulnerable).
 - Supporting the activities of Warning Zone.
 - Supporting local initiatives delivered from local fire and rescue stations.

3. Report Detail

- 3.1 Prior to the establishment of the Community Safety Education Team in 2004/05, the vast majority of community safety focused activities were delivered by wholetime operational staff based at wholetime fire and rescue stations.

- 3.2 The main activities that operational staff were involved in included schools visits and undertaking Home Fire Safety Checks. Although relatively successful in terms of popularity, a number of issues were apparent i.e.
- The target areas were limited to those that were in the vicinity of wholetime fire and rescue stations with little, if any focus, afforded to the wider community areas covered by the retained duty system stations;
 - Schools education was limited by the locality of the school and generally orientated around the fire engine rather than promoting a better understanding of key fire safety messages;
 - Targeting of individuals was focused on a 'blanket coverage' approach rather than on the issues of vulnerability and need; and
 - Very often activities had to be cancelled and rearranged as a consequence of operational priorities i.e. fire and emergency calls.
- 3.3 The agreement by the CFA to establish a dedicated Community Safety Education Team in 2004 has enabled all of the above issues to be addressed and rectified. In addition to this, it has also enabled a more inclusive and dynamic Community Safety Strategy to be developed that is better focused on citizen and community needs.
- 3.4 The main activities that the Community Safety Education team are involved in include:
- Delivery of the Schools Education initiative across all communities;
 - Delivery of the Home Fire Safety Check initiative across all communities (targeted towards the most vulnerable);
 - Supporting the activities of Warning Zone; and,
 - Supporting local initiatives delivered from local fire and rescue stations.

Schools Education Programme

- 3.5 The annual schools education programme is focused on the delivery of essential fire safety messages to all Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (this is without exception). The input provided to the pupils has been standardised for consistency purposes and accords with the curriculum requirements associated with the PSHE/Citizenship agenda. The input also contributes to the subject of science (properties and changes to materials) and everything that is presented is backed up by access to learning materials that are available via the CFA's website.
- 3.6 In 2013/14, the Community Safety Education Team carried out 334 school visits and delivered 668 presentations to an audience of approximately 26,000 children and teachers.
- 3.7 Feedback from all schools is very positive and evaluation of the programme is ongoing with around 78% of respondents to the standard questionnaire that is sent to parents stating that their behaviour and appreciation of risk has changed

positively as a consequence of the input to their children.

Home Fire Safety Checks

- 3.8 The Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) initiative has been ongoing for more than a decade and thousands of residents throughout Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have benefited from it. Although operational staff still carry out HFSCs, the vast majority of HFSCs are now undertaken by the Community Safety Education Team.
- 3.9 In 2013/14, the Team carried out and completed 2,964 HFSCs. In addition to this, they also carried out a further 990 visits that were unsuccessful i.e. the owner/occupier was either not in or was not interested.
- 3.10 All HFSCs that are planned and delivered are done so on the basis of 'risk' i.e. focus is maintained on those citizens that are most vulnerable in our society. A key benefit that is apparent in utilising the Community Safety Education Team in the delivery of the programme is that associated with the diversity of the Team. The mix of gender and ethnic backgrounds of the individuals in the Team ensures that the widest possible access to our communities can be achieved.

Warning Zone

- 3.11 Warning Zone is a unique interactive learning centre for young people that is focused on the delivery of safety information around 8 key themes including arson and criminal damage, water safety and fire safety in the home. Its support is a key element of the extant Community Safety Strategy.
- 3.12 The CFA currently provides support to Warning Zone in two ways. The first is through the sponsorship of two zones (arson and criminal damage and fire safety in the home); the second is through the secondment of a full-time member of the Community Safety Education Team. The sponsorship element of support equates to an annual payment of approximately £2,700 per year. The secondment costs are in the region of £25,400 per year (salary).
- 3.13 The benefit of the support is the access that the facility provides to in excess of 8,000 young people per annum.

Local Initiatives

- 3.14 The decentralisation of management arrangements as they apply to the Community Safety Education Team was primarily implemented in order to increase local capacity to develop and deliver bespoke local safety initiatives.
- 3.15 In 2013/14, the team were involved in delivering 198 local initiatives that ranged from talks to community groups through to assisting in the delivery of road safety programmes.
- 3.16 Since 2004 following the establishment of the Community Safety Education Team, performance against all key fire related performance indicators has improved. By way of example, the following 3 graphs provide evidence of improvement against

some of the key indicators.

Figure 1: Total Number of Fires Attended

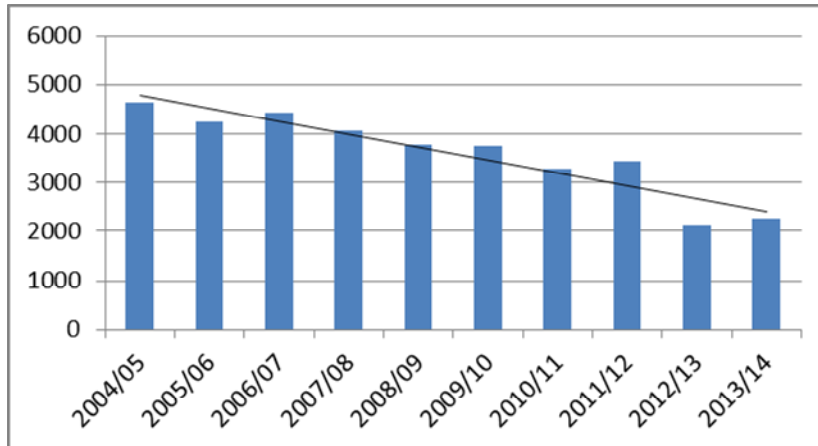


Figure 2: Total Number of Secondary Fires Attended

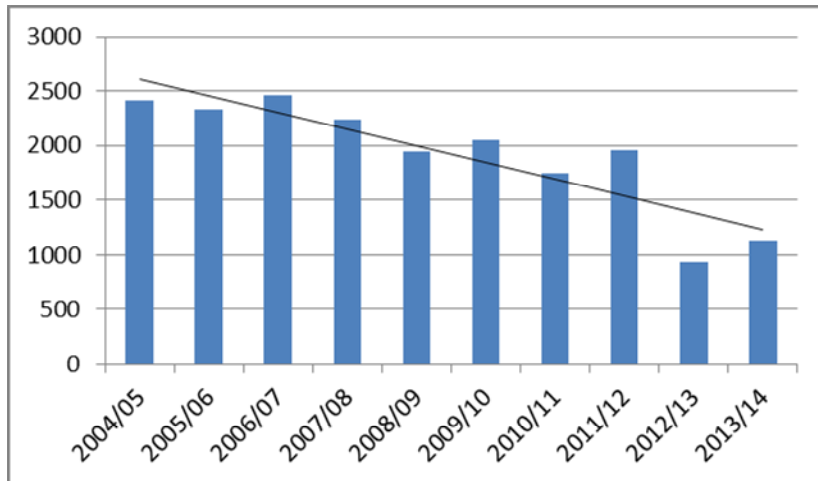
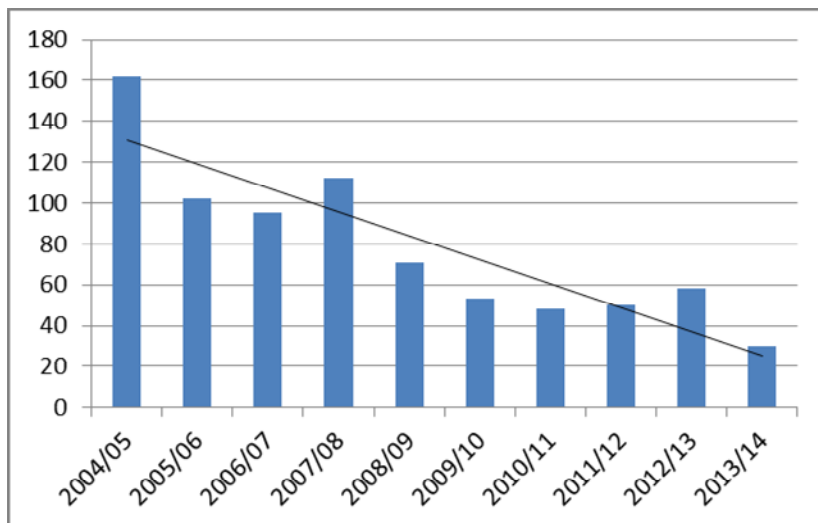


Figure 3: Total Number of Injuries From Fire



3.17 At the same time that improvements in the delivery of the Community Safety Strategy and general performance against indicators has been achieved through the establishment of the Community Safety Education Team, opportunities have

been implemented to ensure that operational staff are provided with more time and capacity to focus on training and understanding risk in their localities.

- 3.18 This has been vitally important given the fact that experience levels have reduced because of the reduction in the number of fires and other emergencies that the CFA is now attending. This has subsequently required an increased level of training provision to be incorporated into general working arrangements in order to ensure the ongoing maintenance of competence and confidence of staff. Further to this, a greater understanding of risk in the each locality ensures that staff are better prepared to manage and deal with emergency incidents as and when they occur.

4. Report Implications / Impact

4.1 *Legal (including crime and disorder)*

The CFA has a duty to provide safety information to citizens in accordance with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. How it chooses to discharge this duty is at the discretion of the CFA.

4.2 *Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)*

The annual revenue cost (for salaries only) for employing the Community Safety Education Team is £241,680 per year based upon top of grade and not taking into account on-costs (National Insurance and Employer's Pension Contributions). This accords with current Team establishment. By way of comparison, a similar provision based upon the costs of employing the same number of wholetime firefighters would be £276,013 per annum.

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

- a) The use of the Community Education Support Team to be the primary means by which the Community Safety Strategy is delivered has enabled wholetime operational staff to devote more time and focus on training and understanding risk. This has ensured the ongoing effective management of health, safety and welfare considerations to be achieved.
- b) Any changes to existing delivery arrangements would need to be fully considered prior to implementation on the basis of risk.

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

Service user satisfaction in relation to the extant community safety arrangements is very positive. Surveys following the delivery of the range of initiatives that are provided are good.

4.5 *Environmental*

None.

4.6 ***Impact upon Our Plan Objectives***

- a) The current community safety delivery arrangements ensure that operational staff are able to maintain competence and confidence to deal with the wide range of complex emergency incident scenarios that they are required to resolve.
- b) The current community safety delivery arrangements ensure that the Community Safety Strategy and associated statutory duties are effectively discharged.

5. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the report.

6. Background Papers

Various background papers are available to Members, including CFA papers and the Community Safety Strategy, upon request.

7. Appendices

None.