

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 21 June 2023

Subject: Service Delivery Update

Report by: Callum Faint – Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Author: Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to update Combined Fire Authority on key Service Delivery performance for the previous year, April 2022 to March 2023.

Recommendation

2. The CFA is requested to note the update provided on the key service delivery matters for the period April 2022 – March 2023.

Executive Summary

3. This report sets out the progress; or otherwise, that has been achieved in relation to Service Delivery and provides an overview of the previous year April 2022 – March 2023 inclusive. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:
 - Prevention;
 - Protection;
 - Response;
 - Performance;
 - Incidents of note.

Background

Prevention

4. Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 13,647 successful home safety checks were completed, this is compared to 13,023 the previous year and 1,781 more than the three-yearly average.
5. The intent of the Home Safety Check (HSC) is to identify potential hazards, educate homeowners or occupants about fire safety measures, and provide recommendations to minimise the risk of fires and enhance overall fire safety.
6. The Service utilises a risk matrix to identify those who are at a greater risk of fire as well as working with partner agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community are prioritised.

7. During the last year, the Service also attended 1,074 Community Safety events and delivered fire and road safety advice to the local communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
8. During April 2022 – March 2023, the Service attended 223 schools to deliver the schools programme. This is offered to all state and independent primary schools in the Service area, targeting years Year 1 (5/6-year olds) and Year 5 (9/10-year olds).
9. The program is designed to ensure that all children in the service area have consistent fire safety education at least twice in their school lives. It is also an effective way to educate families, as children are encouraged to share what they have learned with their parents.

Protection

10. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
11. The order applies to all non-domestic premises, including common areas of residential buildings, and aims to simplify and consolidate fire safety regulations into a single piece of legislation. It places the responsibility for fire safety on the "responsible person," who is typically the employer, owner, or occupier of the premises. This person is required to carry out a fire risk assessment, implement appropriate fire safety measures, and maintain them.
12. In order to fulfil its duty to manage risk within the communities it serves, Fire Protection Team staff will carry out fire safety audits on premises that the legislation applies to as part of a risk-based inspection programme (RBIP).
13. Fire Safety Inspectors completed 1,216 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs), of which 976 were within the risk-based inspection programme for 2022/23. This is compared to 871 the previous year.
14. Fire Safety Planning and Consultation: During 2022/23, Fire protection teams assisted in developing and reviewing 711 building regulations. They have provided guidance on emergency evacuation procedures, fire safety protocols, and the design and placement of fire safety equipment.
15. Fire Safety Enquiries: Fire Protection teams have also provided consultation services to businesses, organisations, and individuals seeking advice on fire safety measures on 403 occasions over the last 12 months. This included reviewing building plans, recommending fire protection solutions and suggesting appropriate fire safety strategies. They have also addressed 664 fire safety concerns raised.
16. Partnership and Collaboration: Fire safety teams have fostered partnerships and collaboration with businesses, industry associations, and trade organisations in promoting fire safety during 2022/23. They have engaged in joint initiatives, such as Better Business for All as well as providing engagement events to support businesses in working together to address fire safety challenges specific to certain industries or sectors.

Response

17. The Service attended 9,441 incidents April 2022 to March 2023, of which, 3,367 (35%) were non-fire incidents, 3,423 (36%) were fire false alarms and 2,651 (29%) were fire incidents. This is an increase of 998 more incidents than the three-yearly average of 8,443.
18. It should be bore in mind that the benchmark figure is detrimentally affected by the national lockdown restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw a reduction in the number of incidents attended along with the extreme weather conditions.
19. Between April 2022 and March 2023 inclusive, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue has attended 79 fatalities at a variety of incidents, to include:
 - a) 4 x Fire related;
 - b) 17 x Road Traffic Collisions;
 - c) 58 x Special Services (*assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide*).
20. To ensure crews are prepared for the variety of incidents the Service attend, both Whole-time and On-Call staff have participated in a large number of exercises over the year. These scenarios ensure that staff are able to maintain their competence, along with feeding any learning into the Operational Learning Board to allow the development of the whole workforce. Exercises include:
 - National Urban Search and Rescue at the Fire Service College;
 - Service exercises for high-rise and basement fires;
 - Over the border exercises with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services;
 - Multi-agency exercises;
 - District exercises, testing the risk plans of a building.

Performance

21. On-Call availability for 2022/23 has seen a 2.6% decrease from 66.1% to 63.5%. This is a sector issue that is being experienced Nationally and can be attributed to several factors:
 - a. Changing Demographics: The demographics of the population have changed over time, with more people working non-traditional hours or having commitments that make it challenging for them to be On-Call firefighters. This shift in demographics has resulted in a smaller pool of potential applicants.
 - b. Increased Employment Commitments: Many individuals have taken on full-time employment or multiple jobs, making it difficult for them to commit to On-Call availability. The demands of their primary occupations may not allow them to be readily available for emergency response.
 - c. Lifestyle Changes: Modern lifestyles have become increasingly busy and demanding, leaving less time for individuals to commit to On-Call availability. People often have multiple personal and family responsibilities, limiting their ability to respond to emergencies at a moment's notice.

- d. Training and Commitment: The training and commitment required to become an On-Call firefighter can be extensive, requiring individuals to balance their regular occupations, personal lives, and the demands of the fire service. This can discourage some potential recruits from pursuing this role.
22. The Service has recognised these issues and is developing several strategies to address these challenges and maintain an effective level of On-Call availability including:
- a. Flexible contracts;
 - b. Revised initial basic training;
 - c. Employer recognition events.
23. Whole-time availability has seen an increase on the previous year from 97.6% to 98.3% for 2022/23.
24. Attendance times to life critical incidents was slightly above the 10-minute attendance time at 10 minutes 39 seconds. Road traffic incidents within Rutland, Melton and Harborough District are detrimentally impacting attendance times mainly due to the rurality and travel distance in these areas.

Incidents of Note

25. The following are incidents of note during the previous 12 months:

April 2022

Building Fire, Loughborough – five appliances plus specials
Cause – Deliberate ignition

May 2022

House Fire, Hinckley – five appliances
Cause – Accidental ignition by smoking materials

June 2022

Storage Yard, Market Harborough – six appliances plus specials
Cause – Deliberate ignition

July 2022

July saw significant and sustained emergency calls which resulted in the declaration of a major incident on 19 July including:

Wildfire – Newtown Linford - eight appliances plus reliefs and specials
Incident was protracted over 22 days.

Building Fire – Walton on the Wolds - six appliances plus specials
Building involved in fire; accidental ignition due to weather.

Barn Fire – Skeffington - five appliances plus specials
Barn involved in fire with cylinders, accidental ignition due to weather.

August 2022

August saw the highest number of incidents for ten years, including:

Building Fire – Leicester - seven appliances plus specials.
Cause - accidental ignition caused by by-pass of electrical circuits.

Building Fire – Shepshed - eight appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental ignition.

September 2022

Building collapse – Leicester - five appliances plus specials
Partial collapse of building resulting in declaration of a major incident by the Police due to impact within Leicester City.

October 2022

Building Fire – Leicester - seven appliances plus specials.
Cause undetermined believed due to the extent of damage and structural integrity of the building.

Building Fire (High Rise) – Leicestershire - five appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental believed to be due to unattended cooking.

November 2022

Building Fire (High Rise) – Leicester - eight appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental due to fault on storage heater.

December 2022

Building Fire (High Rise) – Leicester - six appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental due to cooking.

Building Fire (Commercial) – Leicester - six appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental due to electrical fault.

January 2023

Building Fire (Residential Care Home) – Tixover - five appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental

February 2023

Building Fire (Public House) – Lutterworth - six appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental due to spark from log burner.

March 2023

Building Fire (Commercial) – Loughborough - eight appliances plus specials.
Cause – accidental due to electrical fault.

Report Implications/Impact26. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified at this time.

27. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

28. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of Service delivery)

None arising from this report.

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

None identified at this time.

30. Environmental

None identified at this time.

31. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

This report sets out relevant developments and performance achieved by the Service Delivery Directorate in pursuance of the objectives set out in Our Plan.

Officers to Contact

Callum Faint – Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk

07800 709922

Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

paul.weston@leics-fire.gov.uk

07966 111253