

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 24 June 2024**

**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 provide an update on the key Service Delivery performance for the previous year, April 2023 to March 2024.

### **Recommendation**

2. The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is requested to note the contents of this report and the key achievements over the period.

### **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 2023 – March 2024 inclusive. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:
  - Prevention;
  - Protection;
  - Response;
  - Performance.

### **Background**

#### Prevention

4. As part of the prevention strategy, the Service undertakes Home Safety Checks (HSC) with the intent 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.
5. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with young children, as they may have higher risks or specific needs in case of a fire.
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. Between April 2023 and March 2024, a total of 14,824 successful home safety checks were completed. This is compared to 13,674 the previous year and 2,954 more than the 3-yearly average.
8. In the past year, the Service actively engaged in 1,226 Community Safety events across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, during which officers have delivered comprehensive fire and road safety advice to the local community. This aimed to educate the community on best practices for staying safe in various situations, raise awareness about potential hazards, and promote a culture of safety and prevention throughout the region.
9. During April 2023 – March 2024, the Service attended 259 schools to deliver the schools program. This is offered to all state and independent primary schools in the Service area, targeting Year 1 (5/6-year olds) and Year 5 (9/10-year olds).
10. The program is designed to ensure that every child within the service area receives comprehensive fire safety education at least twice during their school years, typically at different educational stages to reinforce and build upon previous knowledge. This initiative not only equips children with essential fire safety skills but also serves as an effective way to reach families.
11. By encouraging children to share what they have learned with their parents and guardians, the program extends its impact beyond the classroom, fostering a community-wide culture of safety and preparedness. Through this approach, the Service aims to create a well-informed community that prioritises fire safety and prevention.

### Protection

12. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
13. 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.
14. 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 program (RBIP).
15. Fire Safety Inspectors completed 1,596 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs), of which 1,097 were within the risk-based inspection program for 2023/24. This is compared to 1,216 FSA's the previous year.
16. Fire Safety Planning and Consultation: During 2022/23, Fire Protection teams assisted in developing and reviewing 962 building regulations and licensing consultations. They have provided guidance on emergency evacuation

procedures, fire safety protocols, and the design and placement of fire safety equipment.

17. **Fire Safety Enquiries:** Fire Protection teams have also provided consultation services to businesses, organisations, and individuals seeking advice on fire safety measures on 510 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 771 fire safety concerns raised.
18. **Partnership and Collaboration:** Fire Safety teams have fostered partnerships and collaboration with businesses, industry associations, and trade organisations in promoting fire safety during 2023/24. They have engaged in joint initiatives, such as Better Business for All (BBFA) and the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) as well as providing engagement events to support businesses in working together to address fire safety challenges specific to certain industries or sectors.
19. **Feedback:** During the reporting period, the Service collected feedback from a total of 253 businesses. An overwhelming 99% of these reported that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the level of service they received. This indicates a strong positive response and suggests that the Service is effectively meeting the needs and expectations of local businesses. The feedback highlights the quality and reliability of the Service, reinforcing its reputation and trustworthiness among the business community.

### Response

20. The Service attended 9,345 incidents April 2023 to March 2024, of which, 3,869 (41%) were non-fire incidents, 3,389 (36%) were fire false alarms and 2,087 (23%) were fire incidents. This is an increase of 999 more incidents than the 3-yearly average of 8,444.
21. It should be noted that the benchmark figure was adversely affected by several factors. The national lockdown restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic led to a significant decrease in the number of incidents attended.
22. Additionally, over the last 12 months, extreme weather conditions further influenced these figures, compounding the overall impact on the benchmark data. These unique circumstances should be considered when evaluating the benchmark figure.
23. As previously reported to the CFA, the Service has experienced a significant increase in the number of non-fire related incidents. This increase is particularly evident in the growing number of instances where the Service provides crucial support to partner agencies, such as the Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service.
24. One of the key areas of support involves gaining entry into premises to assist in accessing casualties. This vital collaboration ensures that emergency services can respond more effectively to various situations, highlighting the expanding role and adaptability of the Service in addressing a broader range of community needs.

25. Between April 2023 and March 2024 inclusive, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service attended 93 fatalities at a variety of incidents, to include:
- a) 5 x Fire related;
  - b) 20 x Road Traffic Collisions;
  - c) 68 x Special Services (*assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide*).

### Performance

26. On-Call availability for 2023/24 has risen by 1.6%, increasing from 63.5% to 65.1% over the past year. As previously noted, On-Call availability is a widespread issue affecting the sector across 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 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.
27. 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;
  - d. Introduction of Variable Response Vehicles (VRV's).
28. Whole-time availability for 2023/24 has remained in line with the previous year at around 98%.
29. The response time to life-critical incidents has been slightly above the 10-minute target, averaging 11 minutes and 43 seconds. A significant contributing

factor to these delays is road traffic incidents in districts such as Rutland, Melton, and Harborough.

30. Upon closer examination, there are two primary reasons for this higher response time. First, the travel distance from the station to the incident site can be considerable, particularly in more remote or rural areas. Second, the time taken during call handling to accurately establish the exact location of the incident can also add to the delay. These factors combined result in longer response times.

### **Report Implications/Impact**

31. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified at this time.

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

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

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

None arising from this report.

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

None identified at this time.

35. Environmental

None identified at this time.

36. 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](mailto:callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk)

07800 709922

Paul Weston – Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

[paul.weston@leics-fire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.weston@leics-fire.gov.uk)

07966 111253

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