

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 29 November 2023

Subject: Service Delivery Update

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For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to update the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) on key Service Delivery performance for the first two quarters of 2023/24, April to September 2023 inclusive.

Recommendation

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

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 performance and activities within the first two quarters of 2023. The subject matter areas that are covered in this report include:
 - Prevention;
 - Protection;
 - Response;
 - Performance;
 - Incidents of note.

Background

Prevention

4. Prevention refers to a proactive approach the Service takes, aimed at minimising the risk of fires and other emergencies before they occur. Fire prevention involves a range of activities and initiatives designed to educate the public and communities about fire safety and to implement measures that reduce the likelihood of fires, including areas such as:
 - Home Safety Checks;
 - Community Safety Events;
 - Schools Educational Programme.
5. 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, and prevention activities are targeted accordingly.

6. 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.
7. Between April and September 2023, a total of 8,074 successful home safety checks were completed, compared to 6,467 the previous year. Among these, 1,898 were referrals from partner agencies.
8. During the reporting period, the Service also installed 2,834 alarms, comprising of 2,679 standard smoke alarms, 49 Carbon Monoxide alarms and 106 smoke alarms for those individuals with hearing impairments.
9. The Service has also attended 603 Community Safety events during the period, delivering both fire and road safety advice to the local communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
10. As part of its prevention strategy, the Service, along with its partners, actively supports the Warning Zone centre. The program educates Year 6 pupils across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland about the risks and consequences associated with certain types of behaviour. The centre reinforces the key messages delivered by the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's schools education programme by using fun, engaging and life-like scenarios in interactive zones to deliver important safety advice on areas including fire risk in the home and arson.
11. In addition to supporting Warning Zone, the Service has also attended 15 schools to deliver its own 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). The programme 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

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. 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.
13. 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).
14. Fire Safety Inspectors have completed 749 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs), of which 532 were within the risk-based inspection programme for 2022/23. This is compared to 738 the previous year.

15. Fire Safety Planning and Consultation: So far this year, Fire protection teams assisted in developing and reviewing 326 building regulations. They have provided guidance on emergency evacuation procedures, fire safety protocols, and the design and placement of fire safety equipment.
16. Fire Safety Enquiries: Fire Protection teams have also provided consultation services to businesses, organisations, and individuals seeking advice on fire safety measures on 255 occasions. This included reviewing building plans, recommending fire protection solutions and suggesting appropriate fire safety strategies. They have also addressed 366 fire safety concerns raised.
17. Partnership and Collaboration: Fire safety teams continue collaboration with businesses, industry associations, and trade organisations in promoting fire safety. 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

18. The Service attended 4,782 incidents between April and September, of which, 1,814 (39%) were non-fire incidents, 1,695 (35%) were fire false alarms and 1,273 (26%) were fire incidents. This is an increase of 399 more incidents than the 3-year average of 4,383.
19. Regrettably, during the reporting period, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue has attended 39 fatalities at a variety of incidents, including:
 - a) 3 x Fire related;
 - b) 9 x Road Traffic Collisions;
 - c) 24 x Special Services (*assisting partner agencies/gaining entry/suicide*).
20. Since the last report, the Service has worked with its blue light partners to deliver Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) training to its Incident Commanders.
21. Ensuring the safety of the public relies on responses that are both timely and well-coordinated. JESIP training is instrumental in securing smooth collaboration among emergency services, thereby mitigating the risks of delays or communication breakdowns that could compromise the well-being of individuals in emergency situations.

Performance

22. On-Call availability for April to September 2023 has seen a slight increase from 63.5% to 64.5% compared to the previous year. However, On Call availability remains an issue that is being experienced nationally and can be attributed to several factors:
 - a. Changing Demographics: The demographic of the population has 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.
23. 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:
- Flexible contracts;
 - Revised initial basic training;
 - Employer recognition events.
24. Whole-time availability has seen an increase on the previous year from 98.3% to 97.8% for the reporting period.
25. Attendance times to life critical incidents was slightly above the 10-minute attendance time at 11 minutes 17 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.
26. The Community Risk Management Plan, currently out for public consultation, is reassessing the 10-minute response time for all life-risk incidents, which also encompasses call handling time. Through an analysis that integrates the historical incident and travel time data with academic research, the Service is confident that maintaining the 10-minute target is appropriate for Primary Domestic Dwelling fires. For "other types" of life-risk incidents, such as road traffic collisions, the Service will aim for an average response time of 12 minutes, a target deemed attainable and relative for the majority of such incidents.

Incidents of Note

27. The following are incidents of note during for the period July – September 2023:

July 2023

Building Fire, Whetstone – 6 appliances plus specials. Cause – Accidental ignition.

Highrise Fire, Leicester – 6 appliances plus specials. Cause - Accidental

August 2023

Domestic Dwelling, Leicester – 5 appliances. 2 rescues. Cause – Accidental

Commercial Building, Loughborough – 5 appliances. Cause - Accidental

September 2023

Building Fire, Leicester – 5 appliances plus specials. Cause – Accidental ignition.

Highrise Fire, Leicester – 6 appliances plus specials. Cause - Deliberate

Report Implications/Impact28. Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified at this time.

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

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

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

None arising from this report.

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

None identified at this time.

32. Environmental

None identified at this time.

33. 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

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