



LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

Issued on: Thursday 9 February 2017

LARGE FIRE AT CORAH BUILDING, WATLING STREET

Multiple calls were received to a large fire in the city centre at 2.42am this morning. We mobilised eight fire appliances (from Central, Eastern, Western, Southern, Wigston and Melton Mowbray Fire and Rescue Stations) as well as two ALPs (Aerial Ladder Platform), from Birstall and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to attend the Watling Street incident.

Firefighting crews have done a fantastic and professional job in dealing with this large building fire that also involved a large number of vehicles. The derelict building, measuring 50m x 25m, was totally destroyed by the fire and included a partial collapse. In addition, 33 cars have been completely destroyed with a further 20 damaged by fire, smoke and radiant heat within the compound at the rear of the derelict building. The building unit opposite the fire, Parkway Volkswagen, and a further six cars were also damaged by radiated heat.

This is the SEVENTH fire of this nature on this site we've been called to attend in the last two years! This is despite attending this site on EIGHT occasions in the past six months as part of our preventative strategy to reduce the risk of further fires occurring.

Our main fear is that it is only a matter of time before we are reporting the death or serious injury of a firefighter or a member of public.

The impact of this fire on your fire and rescue service will last for days because of the detailed work we will now have to complete to make sure that the damaged building is safe. This will, of course, restrict us from dealing with other important tasks.

The fire has also caused disruption to morning traffic in the city as roads have been closed to keep the public safe from the fire, smoke and the unsafe building structure. Although roads are now open, we will remain at the site whilst we carry out a detailed investigation, using our Fire Investigators and the regional Fire Investigation Dog, Dexter.

Initial findings lead us to believe that the cause of the fire was deliberate ignition (arson). Without any doubt, these acts of arson are permanently damaging the historic tapestry of our city and are also causing untold economic and environmental damage. We will continue to work with our colleagues at Leicestershire Police and Leicester City Council to do everything we can to prevent this type of unnecessary damage happening again.

People in our communities may have information about this latest fire or know who is responsible for it. We would encourage you to contact Leicestershire Police or the Crimestoppers phone line 0800 555 111 to provide any information you can.

For our local business community we have a series of web pages with advice and information here: www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/at-work

ENDS

Notes to editor: Photos and video footage are available for use via our social media channels.

About the Service

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire related incidents have reduced by 46 percent.

During 2015/16, the Service attended 666 road traffic collisions, of which 174 were extrications freeing 208 people trapped inside their vehicles and completed 5086 home fire safety checks, fitting almost 4481 smoke alarms. Staff organised or supported almost 1431 events aimed at promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, whilst also visiting 332 schools to deliver fire and road safety education to pupils.

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