

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 21st September 2009

SUBJECT: IRMP - OPERATIONAL RESPONSE MONITORING 2008/2009

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information regarding the performance of the Authority's operational resources in respect of average attendance times to building fires for 2008/2009.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members will be aware the introduction of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process in 2004 replaced the previous National Standards of Fire cover that had been in operation for over fifty years.
- 2.2 One key implication of this change was the move away from the prescriptive national operational standards relating to the speed and weight of attack of fire appliances that attend operational incidents. In its place Fire and Rescue Authorities were given the responsibility for both establishing a local risk profile and determining local operational response criteria.
- 2.3 In responding to this challenge the Authority utilised the FSEC Model to effectively assess the spread of life risk within the Tyne and Wear area. Additionally, in order to ensure effective operational cover, the Authority determined that it would provide a minimum standard operational response of two fire appliances to all building fires (IRMP 2004/2005).
- 2.4 In addition, it was determined in the IRMP that efforts would be made to ensure that the average attendance times to building fires of the first and second fire appliances would be maintained broadly in line with such average attendance times prior to the introduction of the IRMP (IRMP 2004/2005).
- 2.5 The decision to monitor the response times to building fires specifically was based on the fact that the risk to life from incidents of fire is at its highest in such premises and this risk based approach focuses attention to those potentially most in need, directly assisting in the reduction of deaths and injuries from incidents of fire.

3 OPERATIONAL RESPONSE MONITORING FOR 2008/2009

- 3.1 The figures for average attendances times for 2008/2009 are set out below, with the pre-IRMP 2003/2004 figures providing the comparative data.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Comparison Period	Average attendance time for first appliance	Average attendance time for second appliance
2003/2004	4 minutes 30 seconds	5 minutes 49 seconds
2008/2009	4 minutes 37 seconds	6 minutes 1 second

- 3.2 The figures contained in the above table show that the Authority's average attendance times to building fires for 2008/2009 are similar to the base year of 2003/2004.
- 3.3 Maintaining the average attendance times broadly in line with the 2003/2004 base has been achieved in the face of many challenges over the past 5 years, such as the Strategic Review of Fire Cover and the reallocation of resources to Prevention duties (4x4). When taking this into account, the above figures are even more impressive and serve to illustrate the professional commitment of the staff in dealing with the management of risk within the Tyne and Wear area.
- 3.4 Members should also note that the figures in 3.1 demonstrate a slightly faster average time than that published by the Minister for Communities and Local Government in response to a Parliamentary question from Fraser Kemp MP, the Authority's Honorary Parliamentary Advisor, in June 2008.
- 3.5 The specific question asked, and the information subsequently provided by the Minister for Communities and Local Government, was based on a far broader range of primary fire data than just building fires, covering incidents involving vehicles, outdoor structures, bridges and tunnels, for example. This was deemed necessary in order to allow for a more accurate comparison to be undertaken between Fire and Rescue Services, the concern being that the more narrowly defined the data requested the more potential there would be for discrepancies in coding between Fire and Rescue Services leading to a gradual reduction in confidence concerning the accuracy of the comparisons.
- 3.6 The average response time to this larger group of incidents still clearly demonstrates that the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service has a rapid response to primary fires and was the fastest of all Fire and Rescue Services in England in 2006 (data for 2007 was not available) with an average time of 5 minutes and 28 seconds, this compares very well against the average of the other Metropolitan Fire Services of 6 minutes 26 seconds.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The details covered within this paper highlight the fact that the Authority is continuing to provide an effective operational response in accordance with its IRMP commitments.
- 4.2 The average attendance times for the first and second appliances to arrive at building fires compares very well against the base years of 2003/2004 and should give Members confidence in the service being provided.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

4.2.1 The average attendance time data elicited with the assistance of Fraser Kemp MP further supports this and demonstrates once again that this Authority is continuing to provide an extremely effective overall operational response to fires in accordance with the IRMP commitments.

4.3 Taking all figures into account the Chief Fire Officer is of the opinion that they demonstrate that the operational response provided by the Authority to the public of Tyne and Wear continues to be of a very high standard.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control; the realisation of efficiencies; the most appropriate use of limited resources; and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place, this area and the risks associated with it are managed as part of the Corporate Risk Management, Performance Management and IRMP processes.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this specific report.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of this report
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Response to Parliamentary question dated 15th June 2008
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management plan 2004/2005