

MEETING: 20 DECEMBER 2010

SUBJECT: BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS CAMPAIGN 2010

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members on the incident activity levels, intervention programmes and incidences of anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the Authority area over the Bonfire period covering 1st to the 6th November 2010.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The night of 5th November and the period leading up to it, is the busiest period operationally for the Fire and Rescue Service and this year was no exception. As in past years measures were taken to ensure that the Service had the capability and resources to deal with the increase in calls to anti-social fires and spate conditions, whilst also maintaining the operational capacity to respond effectively to life threatening calls and major incidents.

2.2 To fulfil this commitment, a campaign was initiated, with a budgetary provision of £1,000. This campaign was developed in conjunction with partners the objectives of which were to:

- Raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of bonfires and the misuse of fireworks.
- encourage people to attend an organised display
- Reinforce the message of the effects of anti-social behaviour and reinforce that attacks against emergency workers are not tolerated.

3 CAMPAIGN INITIATIVES

3.1 One key initiative was the production of a DVD entitled "The Journey of Connor Rowntree". Connor is a young person who suffered severe burns in an accidental fire in May 2009. Although the accident was not bonfire related, the intention was to highlight to young people in the target age group (11-14 year olds), the potential devastating effects of burn injuries on themselves and their families.

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

- 3.2 Initial feedback on the Connor Rowntree story from young people and from education professionals was extremely positive and, as a result of taking part in the campaign, Connor was awarded a local Sun FM Hero award and a national Radio One Teen Hero award.
- 3.3 To influence young people within the target age group Prevention and Education (P&E) staff developed a risk based programme to target secondary schools within Tyne and Wear. Approximately 25,000 young people were visited within schools and shown the Connor DVD and given bonfire and firework safety messages. Copies of the DVD were also provided to Youth Offending Teams and to Safeguarding Children Boards.
- 3.4 A public relations (PR) campaign was delivered in conjunction with Northumbria police consisting of a proactive PR plan, producing a range of press releases and media interviews, including a live interview on Tyne Tees, several radio interviews and editorial articles by reporters from various media agencies who rode fire appliances on 5th November.
- 3.5 A Service-wide poster and leaflet campaign was delivered and a dedicated section within the Service website was established (3,667 visitors). This was complemented by the websites of partner organisations. There was also a new face book page on which TWFRS broadcast safety messages over the bonfire period (3,321 visitors). The Connor DVD was available for viewing on the campaign website, the face book page and on YouTube and was viewed on 2,400 occasions.
- 3.6 Local area meetings were established within each district to deliver the objectives of the campaign. These were attended by representatives from Northumbria Police and Local Authorities to ensure effective delivery within communities.
- 3.7 Local Authority bonfire uplift schemes were in operation throughout the bonfire period. These involved the removal of fuel such as refuse, furniture, and wheelie bins. In addition to service staff reporting bonfires to be uplifted, local authority environmental enforcement officers used their powers to uplift suspected bonfire materials from within the boundaries of residential properties.
- 3.8 Over the bonfire period, a total of 1109 uplifts of bonfires and combustible materials were carried out, this represents an increase of 144% on the number of uplifts (454) carried out in 2009.
- 3.9 The Authority also issued 163 licenses and registered 3 retailers for the storage and sale of fireworks. All premises were scheduled for inspection by Protection and Technical or Operational Response crews.

4 INCIDENT STATISTICS

4.1 For the period 1st to 6th November the following data has been validated, (see Appendix A):

- A 13% reduction in the total number of calls received by Service control (from 1305 in 2009 to 1141 in 2010)
- A 10% reduction in the total number of incidents attended (from 799 in 2009 to 716 in 2010)
- A 4% reduction in the number of deliberate ASB secondary fires (from 386 in 2009 to 370 in 2010)
- An increase in the number of attacks on firefighters from 7 in 2009 to 12 in 2010
- The Strategic Health Authority (SHA) reported that there were 3 bonfire/firework related injuries reported in A&E departments on November 5th, compared to 11 in 2009. There were a total of 10 injuries over 1st – 6th of November 2010, however no figures were available from the SHA for this period in 2009, therefore no comparison can be made.
- There were 2 firework related property fires in 2010, the same as in 2009.

5 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

5.1 Attacks on firefighters increased over the bonfire period from 7 attacks in 2009 to 12 in 2010, and this is an area of concern. However, when viewed in the context of previous years levels are still lower than those experienced in 2007 (14) and 2008 (21). There were no reported physical injuries to firefighters over the bonfire period.

5.2 Further information is currently being collated as to the locations and circumstances of the attacks on firefighters and this intelligence will be utilised in the prevention strategies employed in future campaigns.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 2010 has observed a reduction in the number of bonfire/firework related injuries, the number of calls received, the overall number of incidents attended and more specifically in the number of ASB secondary fires. The number of bonfire and refuse uplifts undoubtedly prevented many more incidents and further reduced the risk to members of the community and fire fighters alike.

6.4 The North East Strategic Health Authority reported a total of 3 fireworks/bonfire related injuries on 5th November, against a total of 11 in 2009. This is the lowest recorded number of people attending A&E departments on the 5th November in the previous 5 years and represents a significant decrease year on year (see Appendix A).

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The approach employed during 2010 required budgetary provision of £1,000 which was fully utilised.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This campaign has been equality impact assessed. A copy of the assessment is available upon request.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

10 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Health and safety of staff is a primary concern. The increase in numbers of attacks on fire fighters will be continually monitored, with education to reduce the number of attacks continuing to form a key element of future campaigns. P&E staff are due to meet with staff from the Harm Reduction Unit of Northumbria Police to discuss attacks on emergency workers.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

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

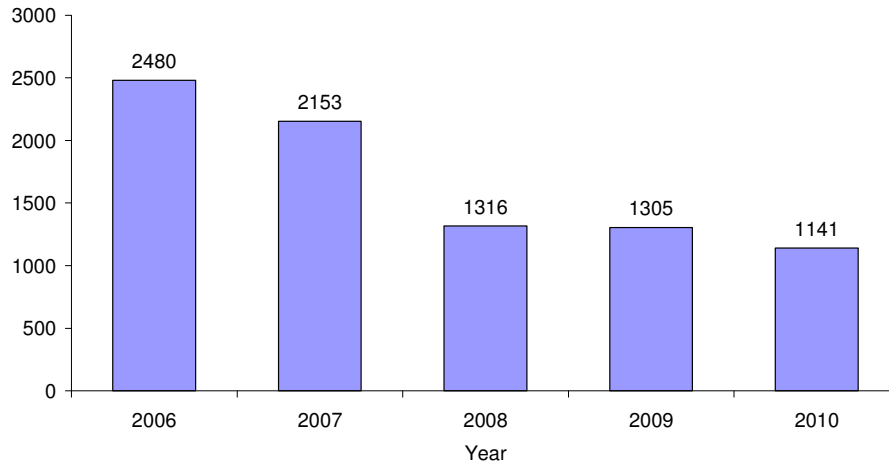
BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

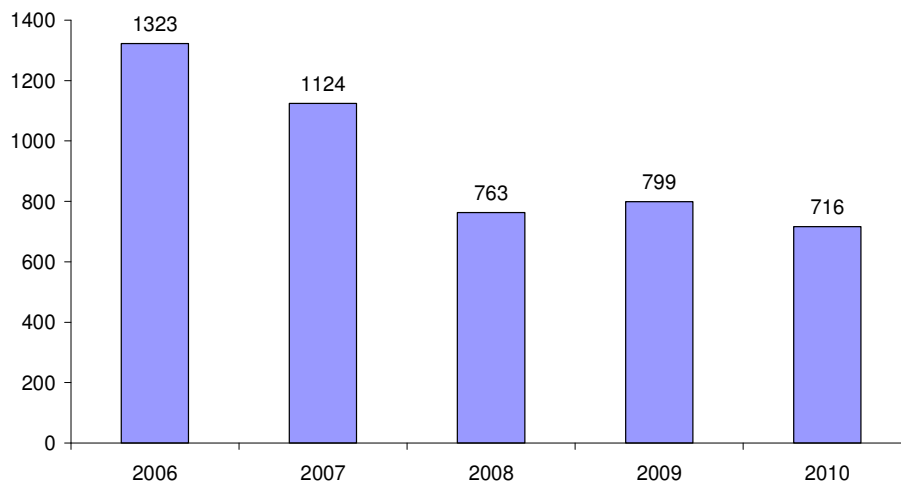
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2009 Report” TWFRS
“Fireworks and Bonfires Ruin Lives in a Flash Campaign” reports of 2007 and 2008, TWFRS
“Get Wise” campaign report 2006,
Northumbria Police 2009 Bonfire PR Campaign Evaluation.

INCIDENT STATISTICS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER

Number of calls taken by control



Number of Incidents attended by TWFRS



Secondary Fires

