

Item 3

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held
in the Fire Authority Rooms, Fire and Rescue
Service Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston
Mere, Sunderland on MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER
2014 at 10.30am

Present:

Councillor N. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors M. Forbes.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Harrison and Stockdale.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 7 July 2014 (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

End of Quarter 2 (April – September) Performance Report 2014-2015

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report providing the Quarter 2 (April-September) performance of the Authority against the targets for 2014/15. Members were asked to consider and scrutinise the contents of the report and provide comments.

Members were advised that the report had been structured to demonstrate the Authority's performance in relation to key performance indicators reflecting organisational priorities. The full suite of performance indicators was appended to the report.

In order to reflect the delivery of services and performance at a lower level the report also contained data relating to district and Metropolitan performance although the latter was more difficult to obtain.

Nina Wilson and John Pratt delivered a presentation to the committee. In summary, Members were advised of the following:-

- 31% fewer deliberate secondary fire
- 30% fewer deliberate fires
- 24% fewer all fire calls attended
- 4.6% fewer primary fires (a 30% reduction when analysing a 5 year period)
- 10% fewer special services
- 0.8% fewer DOMESTIC Automatic false alarms attended

However:

- 10% more accidental dwelling fires
- 11.5% more injuries from accidental dwelling fires
- 37% more malicious false alarms attended
- 1.6% more NON DOMESTIC automatic false alarms attended.

Councillor M Forbes questioned what population tended to increase the fires from cooking appliances and was advised that higher numbers were seen in both high rise and social rented properties.

As students were a targeted risk, work was undertaken with the Universities and also Landlords/residents of private rented dwellings.

Nina advised that the Service attended 300 accidental dwelling fires by the end of quarter 2 and that 74% of these started in the kitchen therefore a focus for the Authority was home safety checks as it was often cooking related appliances left unattended.

Smoke alarms were present in 87% of the dwellings where an accidental fire occurred compared to 71% during the same period the previous year.

With regards to district performance, 5 of the 8 wards were in Newcastle and accounted for 43% of the districts in total. The majority of these being kitchen fires. Work was therefore underway with partners, in particular home groups and carers to monitor the most vulnerable.

As stated above there had been an increase in injuries from accidental fires. Three of these had been classed as serious. However, since June, no serious injuries had been reported. On a district level, Sunderland had seen the highest increase, Newcastle and Gateshead a slight increase and South Tyneside and North Tyneside a slight decrease.

By the end of quarter 2, TWFRS attended 2038 deliberate fires, this being a substantial reduction of 30% in comparison to the same period the previous year.

With regards to deliberate secondary fires, all districts were showing considerable decreases in comparison to the same period last year and are showing a remarkable reduction over the last five years. Emails had also been sent to parents to reduce anti-social behaviour and increase awareness.

Members were advised that with regards to the number of false alarms due to automatic fire alarms from non-domestic premises, the Service attended 1301 incidents, which was an increase of 20 from the previous year. Campaigns and preventative work were therefore ongoing.

With regards to the number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms, a reduction of 0.8% had been seen. Of these incidents, 45% were caused by cooking.

2. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (ii) The publication of the End of Quarter Performance Report be agreed.

Fire Statistics Monitor 2013-2014

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to inform Members of the latest findings of the Fire Statistics Monitor, which provides national performance data on the previous year.

Members were advised that:

The key performance outcomes for TWFRS during 2013/14 were:

- There were 6,446 fires attended by TWFRS, an increase of 21% (1,125) from 2012/13 and a 63% (10,903) reduction from 2001/02
- There were 7,004 False Alarms attended by TWFRS, a reduction of 3% (233) from 2012/13 and a 27% (2,647) reduction from 2001/02
- There were 2,091 non-fire (Special Service) incidents attended by TWFRS, a reduction of 6% (133) from 2012/13 and an 18% (446) reduction from 2001/02
- There were 15,541 incidents attended by TWFRS, an increase of 5% (759) from 2012/13 and a 47% (13,976) reduction from 2001/02

It was pleasing to note that when compared with the national statistics TWFRS's figures were comparable, with the total incidents attended by TWFRS falling by 47% over the last 10 years.

When consideration was given to the 12 year trend for Met's overall, there was also a downward trajectory across all Met's with Tyne and Wear and South Yorkshire having the most positive statistics.

TWFRS' performance in terms of average response times compares very well with the national picture. The national average response time to dwelling fires is 7.4 minutes while in Tyne and Wear it is 5.6 minutes.

3. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Property Tenure and Accidental Dwelling Fires

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to provide committee members with data analysis regarding accidental dwelling fires (LI08) and property tenure.

The report was based on information regarding accidental dwelling fires from 1 December 2011 – 30 November 2012 (year one) and 1 December 2012 – 30 November 2013 (year two). Due to the small data set used, a further report was recommended at the end of 2014/2015 to enable more statistically robust analysis.

Members referred to the main findings of the report that, over the two year period, social rented properties accounted for 36% (414) of all accidental dwelling fires and therefore is the property type experiencing the highest number of such incidents during the reporting period.

In year one, social rented properties experienced the highest number of accidental dwelling fires (39%, 222), in Year Two the number of incidents in social rented properties decreased by 14% (30) to 33% (192). Therefore in Year Two, the property type experiencing the highest number of accidental dwelling fires was owner occupied properties (34%, 200).

Members were advised that over the two year period, Newcastle had the highest number of accidental dwelling fires, with the majority being in social rented properties. 50% of all incidents were single occupancy properties and higher numbers reported were also in purpose built flats. The main source of ignition being cooking appliances.

The Chairman commented that the differences between the districts was interesting and that he would use this information to have discussions with partners.

4 RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Risk Based Attendance Policy for Automatic Fire Alarms in Non-Residential Premises

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to seek the views of Members for TWFRS to adopt a revised, risk based attendance policy to calls for assistance from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFRAs) in non-residential premises. The report also set out the recommended implementation plan for this policy change should it be approved. The intention is for this report to be presented to the full Authority for decision.

It was proposed that between 0800-1800 hours TWFRS would not attend unconfirmed AFA calls to non-residential premises unless a backup call was received confirming a fire or physical sign of fire exists. Any call received reporting a confirmed fire or signs of fire would receive the full pre-determined attendance.

The following exemptions were proposed within the proposed policy. These premises would still receive the full pre-determined attendance:- Hospitals, education premises, COMAH sites, specific high risk premises (determined by local operational intelligence) premises protected by approved/accredited systems, exceptional exemptions.

Members were advised that benefits were the reduction in the number of mobilisations to fire calls generated by AFA systems would increase appliance availability to respond to life risk incidents.

An implementation plan for the proposed risk based attendance policy had been developed. This proposed to go live in June 2015. The estimated cost for delivering this plan was approximately £15,000. This related to a mailshot to all non-domestic premises in the TWFRS area.

5. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The introduction of the Risk Based Attendance Policy be referred to the Authority for consideration;
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

(Signed) N. FORBES
Chairman

