

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**



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 13 NOVEMBER 2023 at 10.30am

Present:

Councillor Usher in the Chair.

Councillors Wood and Woodwark.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Burdis, Dodds and Kilgour.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

3. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 10 July 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to present Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's (TWFRS) Performance Report for Quarter Two 2023/24 (Appendix A) to Policy and Performance Committee.

Louise Clarkson (Director of Corporate Services) advised Members that the Service had achieved or were within 10% of achieving 11 of the 15 KPI's.

Members were asked to note that there had been an 18% reduction in the number of incidents attended which equated to 1952.

False alarms in domestic premises had increased by 14% (214) and false alarms in non-domestic premises had decreased by 7% (60). 38% of all fires attended involved specialist services.

The Director of Corporate Services went on to say that the number of injuries from accidental dwelling fires had decreased by 29% and that cooking was the main cause.

There was a 37% (1616) decrease in deliberate fires and the overall average response time was 5 minutes 40 seconds, which was ten seconds quicker than in Q2 2022/23. The response time to Risk Level 1 incidents was 5 minutes 15 seconds. Members were then advised that staff sickness had reduced by 18.4% (3,741 shifts lost, 842 less compared to Q2 2022/23). The main reason for staff absence being mental health.

A total of 11,615 Safe and Well visits had been carried out, which was an increase of 489 (4.4%) due to a priority list.

There had been 17 accidents which was a reduction of 12 (41%) and 30 near miss reports which was a reduction of 17 (36%). Members were advised that reporting was encouraged across the Service and that there had been 1 RIDDOR reportable injury occurred due to a fractured finger with over 7 days absence injury.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that Pumping appliances were available 96.6% of the time during Q2, which compared to 93.4% in Q2 2023/23. There had been a total of 11,615 Safe and Well visits carried out in across the Service area in Q2, this was an increase of 489 (4.4%). The priority target lists made up the majority of the visits followed by Hot Strikes and Occupier Requests.

The Committee was advised that there were two confirmed fatalities during the reporting period, both occurring during the first three months of the year. Case conferences had been held in order to better understand the events leading up to these incidents occurring and 'Hot Strikes' were carried out in both areas. One involved a 43 year old man due to smoking materials and the other was a 28 year old involved in an explosion.

In relation to automatic false alarms, the main property type was a purpose built flat/Maisonette/Multi Occupancy (632).

In relation to non-domestic fires, 4 incidents had been attended to derelict buildings however good measures were in place, although flooding related incidents had increased by 11% due to climate change.

With regards to the 28 attacks on Firefighters, a reduction of 1, these mainly related to throwing objects or missiles.

842 Fire Safety Audits had been completed which was 42.1% of the yearly target. In response to a question from Councillor Woodwark, the Director of Corporate Services explained that the target had been set following a recent internal audit, however the Executive Leadership Team would be renewing targets as this needed to be reduced and be more reflective.

Councillor Woodwark commented that the number of Automatic False Alarms were increasing however South Tyneside was not where student numbers were increasing.

AM Russell responded by advising that there was a programme of engagement in place with targeted properties. In Newcastle, 25,000 properties had been targeted with 4,000 engaging with fire safety messages leading to a 21% reduction.

Councillor Woodwark commented that engagement with students was always work in progress and questioned where the Service was in terms of engagement with private landlords and HMO's.

AM Russell explained that the Service did target from the priority list but this could be due to the increase in the number of smoke alarms fitted in properties.

Councillor Wood questioned the reason for the increase in specialist services incidents and was advised that this was largely due to incidents relating to road traffic, people on bridges, and removal of objects.

Councillor Woodwark commented that this was an opportunity to highlight this to the Inspectorate as response times could not get any quicker and that attacks on Firefighters were seen as totally unacceptable.

DCFO Nicholson agreed and advised that narrative around specialist services was currently being produced and that collaborative work with NEAS would also be included.

Councillor Usher advised of the issues within his ward at a close by fire station whereby objects were being thrown resulting in the Police needing to be called. As a result, a lot of work was being undertaken within the community working with both the police and Gentoo. Councillor Usher added that the issue was that when taken to court, the individuals were not prosecuted.

The Director of Corporate Service then provided some information in relation to the Bonfire Period and explained that the period covered 1st – 6th November, 2023 and that this year bonfire night fell on the weekend and was also a dry night.

There had been a 6.4% decrease which equated to 29 less incidents and in relation to secondary fire, there had been a decrease of 23.9%. The number of attacks on fire crews had reduced from 7 to 5 which was positive, however the target would always be zero.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that the number of calls received did increase by 539 and that the number incidents attended did decrease due to the triage of calls.

A full report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

4. RESOLVED that:-

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

(Signed) J. USHER
Chair for Meeting