

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 7

MEETING: 17th December 2012

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS AND BONFIRE INCIDENTS 1ST- 6TH NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the incident activity levels, intervention programmes and instances of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) within the Service area over the Bonfire period, 1st to 6th November 2012.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members will be aware, the bonfire period is traditionally the busiest time of the year for the Service and this year was no exception. As in the past, measures were taken to ensure that the Service had the capability and resources to deal with the increase in calls to bonfires, whilst also maintaining the operational capability to respond effectively to life threatening incidents.

2.2 In addition to the operational planning, a proactive Darker Nights Campaign was undertaken during the weeks prior to the 5th November. The campaign was developed in conjunction with local partners and incorporated educational activities, publicity and media messages, bonfire uplift schemes and operational Command and Control arrangements.

2.3 The key objectives of the campaign were to:

- Raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of the misuse/abuse of bonfires and fireworks.
- Encourage people to attend organised displays.
- Reinforce the detrimental effects of anti-social behaviour and impact of attacks against emergency workers.

3 DARKER NIGHTS CAMPAIGN

3.1 Local area meetings were established within each District, with representatives from Northumbria Police and Local Authority's to ensure effective delivery of the objectives within each community.

3.2 To influence young people in the target age group (11-14 year olds), Prevention and Education (P&E) staff developed a risk based education programme to target secondary schools within Tyne and Wear.

Creating the Safest Community

- 3.3 Following on from the success of the 2011 bonfire safety DVD “Be Safe not Sorry”, which has subsequently been employed by other Fire Services and Police Forces nationally, a new educational DVD was produced for the 2012 campaign. This DVD was again produced with assistance from the burns unit at Newcastle RVI and told the story of India Redhead, a local girl who had suffered an eye injury due to a stray firework. Approximately 20,000 young people across Tyne and Wear viewed the film, with extremely positive feedback from young people and education professionals alike.
- 3.4 A Service-wide media and public relations campaign was carried out which involved producing a range of posters, leaflets and press releases, together with organising media interviews and liaising with reporters from various media agencies to ride appliances with operational crews on 5th November. This resulted in 40 press articles in print and online, 5 radio interviews and 3 TV interviews. Additionally the Service delivered a social media campaign which included use of Facebook, YouTube and Twitter in promoting our safety messages and film, whilst encouraging the public to attend an organised display.
- 3.5 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. The uplifting of illegal bonfires prior to ignition clearly reduces the risks to the community and to operational firefighters.
- 3.6 Furthermore the Service registered 124 retailers for the storage and sale of fireworks and issued 24 licences. All premises were inspected by Protection and Technical staff or operational firefighters.

4 INCIDENT STATISTICS

- 4.1 For the period 1st to 6th November, the following data has been validated.
- 10.6% increase in the total number of calls received by Service control (from 930 in 2011 to 1029 in 2012).
 - 0.3% reduction in the total number of incidents attended (from 599 in 2011 to 597 in 2012).
 - 6.3% reduction in the number of deliberate ASB secondary fires (from 303 in 2011 to 284 in 2012)
 - Increase in the number of attacks on fire-fighters, from 3 in 2011 to 9 in 2012.
 - 6 bonfire/firework related injuries reported in A&E departments in 2012, compared to 13 in 2011.

- There were no firework related property fires in 2012, compared to 6 in 2011.
 - Northumbria Police reported a 62% decrease in the number of firework related incidents attended and a decrease of 18% in the number of bonfire related incidents attended. The number of bonfire/firework related arrests increased from 9 in 2011 to 11 in 2012.
- 4.2 It can be seen from the data that the overall number of incidents attended, including the number of ASB secondary incidents, shows a decreasing trend in recent years (Appendix A also refers).
- 4.3 The North East Strategic Health Authority (SHA) reported that firework or bonfire-related injuries treated in A&E departments had reduced to 5 on 5th November, which is a decrease from 9 in 2011. There were a total of 6 injuries over the bonfire period, 1st – 6th of November, compared to 13 in 2011.

5 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

- 5.1 Attacks on fire fighters sadly increased from 3 in 2011 (lowest recorded) to 9 in 2012. Previously recorded attacks amount to 7 in 2009 and 12 in 2010. There were no reported injuries to firefighters over the 2012 period.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A partnership approach to the bonfire period has again proven to be extremely successful in reducing the risk to the community, with 2012 again observing a reduction in the number of deliberate ASB secondary fires.
- 6.2 The number of Local Authority bonfire and refuse uplifts undoubtedly prevents many more incidents and further reduced the risk to members of the community and fire fighters alike.
- 6.3 The North East SHA reported that 5 people had visited A&E departments on 5th November with firework or bonfire-related injuries; a decrease from 9 in 2011.
- 6.4 There were a total of 6 reported injuries over the bonfire period of 1st to 6th of November, compared to 13 in 2011.
- 6.5 In 2012, attacks on fire fighters increased from 3 in 2011 to 9 in 2012. Thankfully no resultant injuries were sustained by firefighters.

7 LOOK FORWARD: FUTURE SAFETY INITIATIVES

- 7.1 The Prevention & Education team continue to deliver locally devised intelligent led initiatives, whilst utilising the national 'Fire Kills' campaign to ensure maximum impact of our local safety messages.
- 7.2 Our Christmas campaign will include press and media releases and fire safety visits to encourage residents and business owners to be vigilant with the increased risks at this time of year.
- 7.3 Looking towards 2013, our next focus is on the period April to June. This period has in the past observed heightened levels of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) fires; an increase which is also experienced in ASB activity by Police and Local Authority's. We will be working with multi-agency partners to deliver a Lighter Nights Campaign targeted at young people across Tyne and Wear. Our intelligence led approach will seek to mirror the successful Darker Nights Campaign, with the aim of reducing the amount of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents across all five Local Authority Areas.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

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

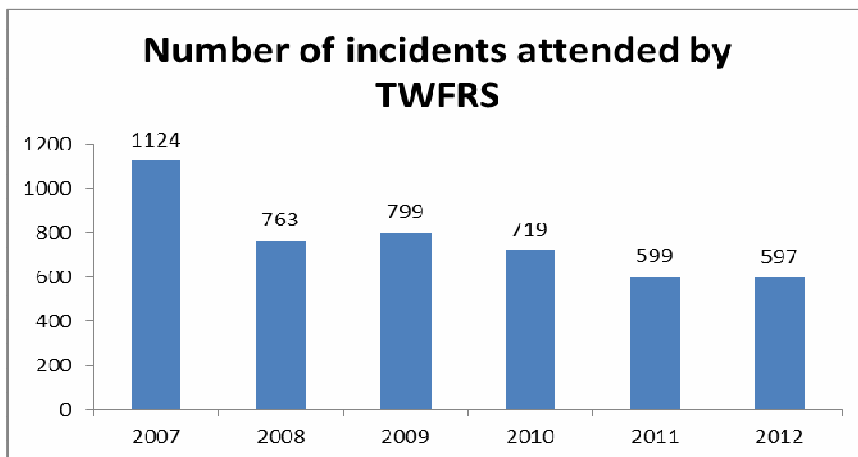
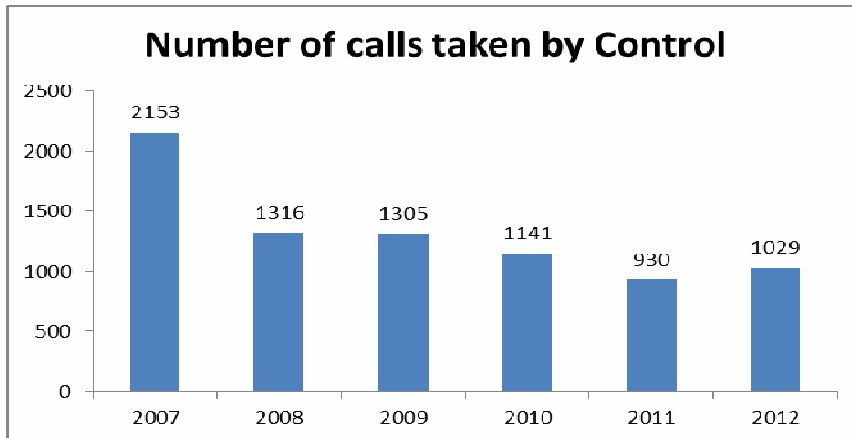
BACKGROUND PAPERS

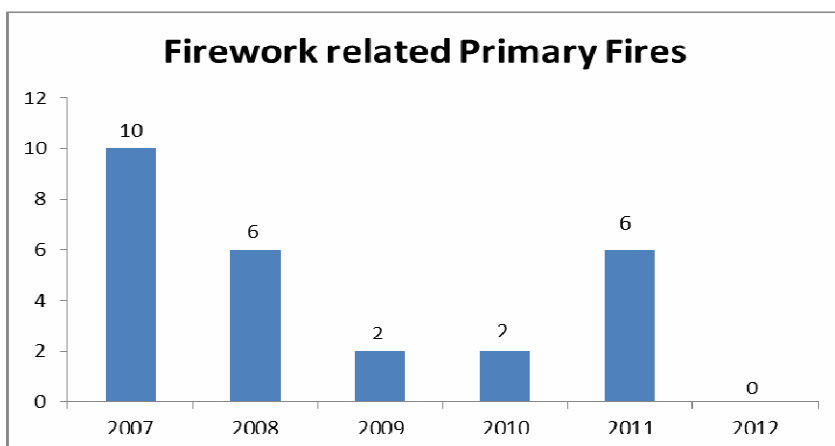
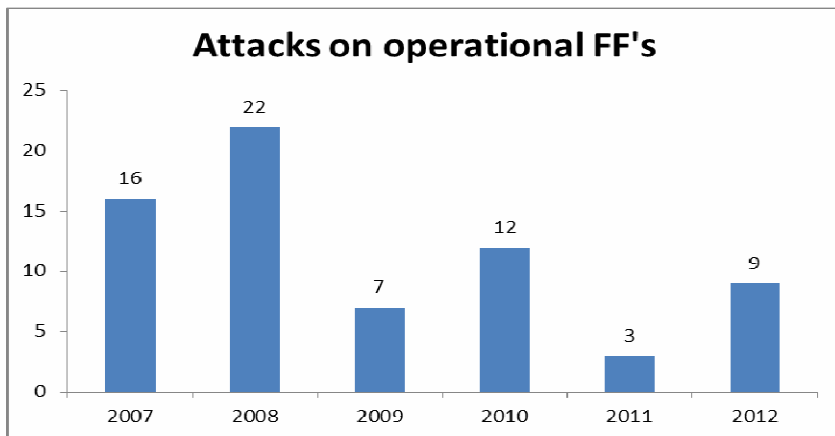
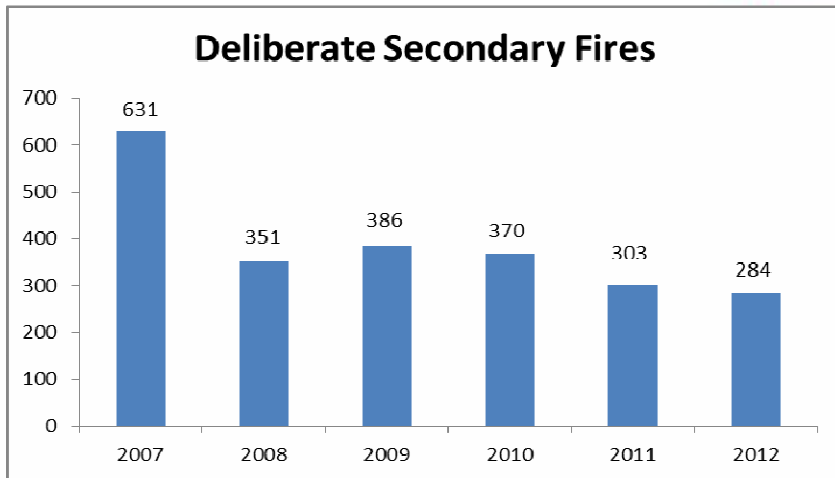
The following background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- "Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2011 Report" TWFRS
- "Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2010 Report" TWFRS
- "Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2009 Report" TWFRS
- "Fireworks and Bonfires Ruin Lives in a Flash" reports of 2008 and 2007, TWFRS
- "Get Wise" campaign report 2006, Northumbria Police

APPENDIX A

INCIDENT STATISTICS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER





Bonfire/firework related injuries in A&E departments 5th November

Organisation/hospital	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	5	10	8	5	3	0	5	1
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:	36	37	1	0	0	0	0	1
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust:	Unavailable	2	Unavailable	1	3	0	3	0
South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust:	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	2
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust:	Not recorded			1	4	3	1	1
TOTAL	44	50	10	8	11	2	9	5

The Strategic Health Authority (SHA) reported that 5 people had visited A&E departments on November 5th with firework or bonfire-related injuries. This is a decrease on the 2011 figure of 9. There were a total of 6 injuries over the bonfire period of 1st – 6th of November, compared to 13 in 2011.

