

MEETING: 25 JANUARY 2010

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS AND BONFIRE INCIDENTS 1ST- 6TH NOVEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information with regard to the bonfire incident levels and the associated community safety initiatives within the Service during the period between 1st and 6th November 2009.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members will be readily aware, the bonfire period is traditionally the busiest time of the year for the Fire and Rescue 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 capacity to respond effectively to life threatening incidents.

2.2 In addition to this operational planning activity, a community safety campaign was also undertaken during the weeks immediately 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 management arrangements.

2.3 The key objectives of the campaign 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 antisocial behaviour and reinforce that attacks against emergency workers are not tolerated.
- reinforce partnership working.

3 PRACTICAL INITIATIVES

3.1 Using the above objectives as a framework, a number of practical initiatives were undertaken. These included the production of a range of press releases, live interviews on Tyne Tees Television and local radio and briefings to reporters from various media agencies. Some of these individuals also accompanied firefighters on the night of the 5th November in order to gain an appreciation of the level of activity that the Service is subject to during this time.

3.2 Additionally a Service-wide poster and leaflet campaign and a dedicated section within the Service website were established (www.twfire.gov.uk/bonfires). This

Creating the Safest Community

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

was complemented by the websites of partner organisations, who also carried a range of safety messages.

- 3.3 To influence young people in the target age group (11-14 year olds), Prevention and Education (P&E) staff developed a risk based programme to target secondary schools within Tyne and Wear, to deliver firework and bonfire safety messages. Approx 25,000 young people within the target age group received this education.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 staff. Over the bonfire period a total of 454 uplifts were carried out and 27 unsecure properties were boarded up.
- 3.6 Furthermore the Authority issued 169 licenses and registered 3 retailers for the storage and sale of fireworks. All premises were inspected by Protection and Technical or Operational Response crews.

4 INCIDENT STATISTICS

- 4.1 A six day period leading up to and including the 1st to the morning of the 6th November is used as the timescale for compiling incident data for comparative purposes. The figures for this year, together with the data for last year, are set out below for information:

INCIDENT STATISTICS	2008	2009
Number of ASB bonfires attended	130	128
Total number of calls received by Service control	1,316	1,331
Total number of all incidents attended	763	798
Fireworks/bonfire related injuries seen in A&E departments	8	10

- 4.2 It can be seen from the above figures that, whilst the numbers of anti-social behaviour bonfires was down when compared with 2008, the number of calls received and the number of all incidents attended were both up on last year, as were the injuries to members of the public and this is disappointing. However, when these figures are compared against those for 2006 and 2007 it can be seen that the overall reduction in incidents over this period remains impressive (See Appendix A).

5 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

- 5.1 Furthermore, whilst acknowledging that an attack on any firefighter carrying out their work is unacceptable it is nevertheless pleasing to note that there was a significant reduction in the number of attacks on operational personnel this year, falling from a total of 22 attacks in 2008 to 7 in 2009. In addition, there were no reported firefighter injuries this year as opposed to one injury being reported in 2008.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In 2009, whilst overall the Service experienced an increase in the total number of incidents attended and the total number of calls received, there was a reduction in the number anti-social bonfire incidents and the number of attacks on fire fighters has reduced significantly when compared to previous years.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

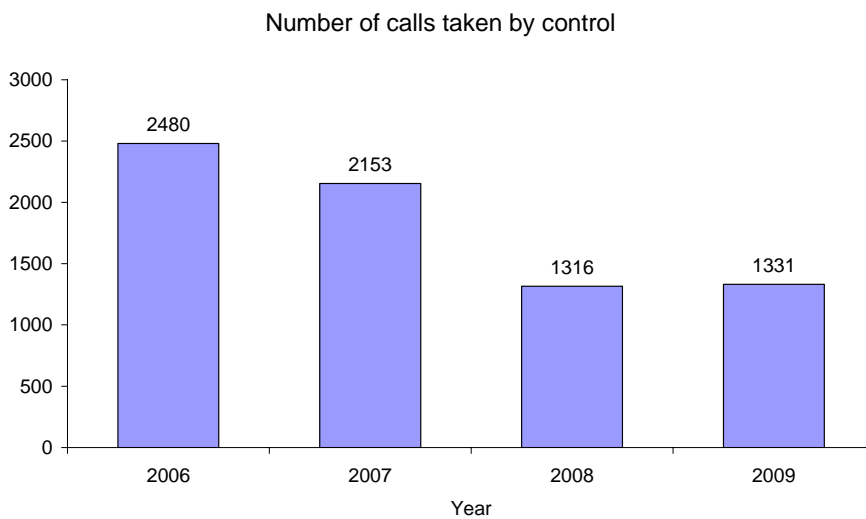
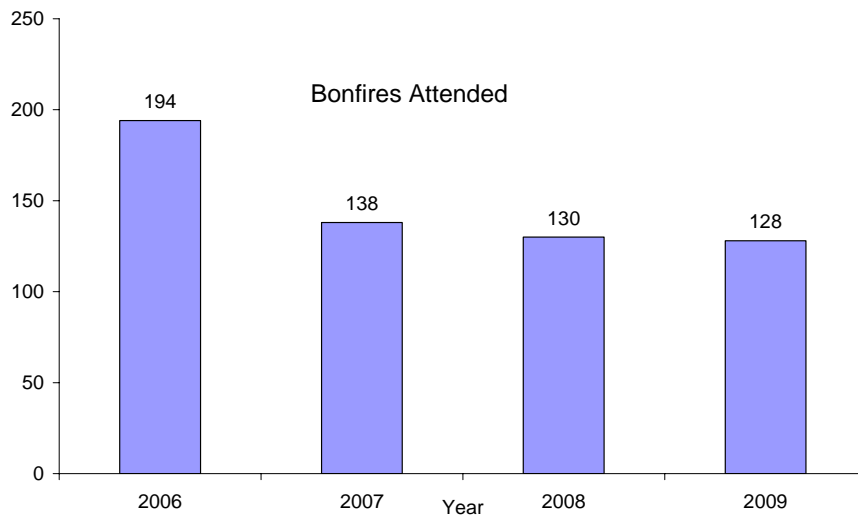
- a) Note the content of the report.
- b) Receive further reports as necessary.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

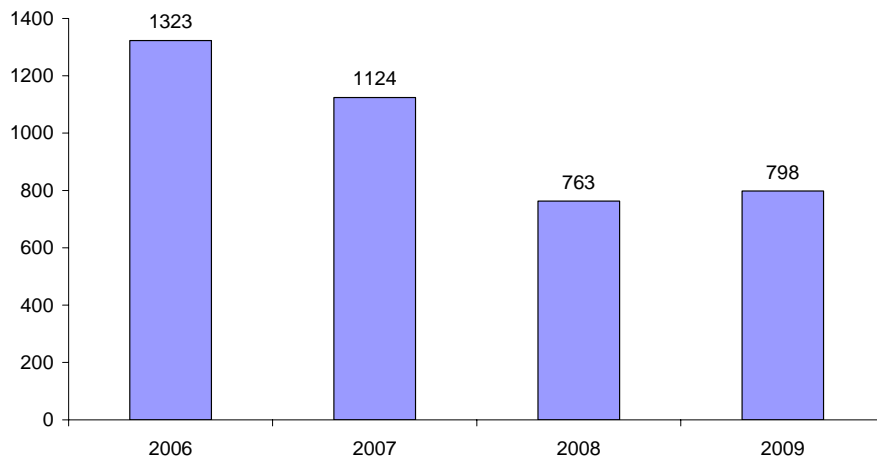
The under mentioned background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

“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 Incidents attended by TWFRS



Number of attacks on Fire Fighters

