

TYNE & WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No. 7

MEETING: 12th DECEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS AND BONFIRE INCIDENTS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CLERK TO THE
AUTHORITY)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the incident activity levels, diversionary and intervention programmes and instances of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) within the Service area over the Bonfire period, 1st to 6th November 2016.

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 took place within each District, with representatives from Northumbria Police and Local Authorities 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 primary and secondary schools within Tyne and Wear.
- 3.3 Following on from the success of the 2015 bonfire safety DVD "Ryan's Regret", a new educational DVD was utilised for the 2016 campaign. "Scarred for Life" was produced using a montage of case studies from previous campaigns. This was delivered to 11 -14 year olds in all targeted secondary schools. 26,344 young people across Tyne and Wear received input as part of the diversionary education programme.
- 3.4 For those young people outside of mainstream education, sessions were delivered to Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) and to Special Educational Needs Schools (SEN's), at SafetyWorks, 304 young people from outside of mainstream education attended SafetyWorks and received this specific, targeted education.
- 3.5 A Service-wide communications campaign was launched to encourage residents to stay safe and have an enjoyable Bonfire period. The campaign included an educational DVD, a second short video, 'Stay safe this bonfire night', e-communications campaign, and proactive and reactive media work, including a member of the press in service control. In total, the media campaign, delivered - 44 newspaper and on-line articles; 1 TV bulletins; and 9 radio pieces.
- 3.6 The Service's e-communications campaign involved dedicated pages on the Service's website which were viewed on 40,139 occasions. Safety messages were also promoted using Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- 3.7 Facebook gained 342 new followers (6.54% increase). Our largest reach on Facebook this year was on the 5th November and related to firefighters being attacked by children throwing fireworks. The post received 400 interactions, 243 shares and reached 59,397 people. The dedicated Facebook bonfire page gained 50 new followers (5.28% increase).
- 3.8 The Service Twitter accounts in total gained 222 new followers, received 341 retweets and, 298 likes over the two accounts. The most successful tweets posted were in relation to the endorsement from Newcastle United Football Club with the help of Aleksandar Mitrovic and Chancel Mbemba with the message of 'Mbemba Mbemba the 5th November'. The post on the 4th November received 52,994 tweets.

- 3.9 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. In 2016, Local Authorities and partners carried out 583 uplifts. This represents a decrease on the 2015 figure of 629. This reduction is partially due to the reduction in funding for uplift schemes.
- 3.10 The Service registered and issued 141 licences to retailers for the storage and sale of fireworks. All applications, except large supermarkets, received an audit by the Fire Safety Department prior to the issue of any License. There were 2 Firework seizures and 4 reported 'Facebook' sellers, all of which was visited by the Fire Safety Department and the Police.
- 3.11 This year was the third year the new mobilising system was used over the bonfire period. Overall, Control reported the system had worked well with good communication between TWFRS and Northumberland.

4 INCIDENT STATISTICS

- 4.1 For the period 1st to 6th November, the following data has been validated.
- 6 % increase in the total number of calls received by Service Control (from 687 in 2015 to 729 in 2016).
 - 1.56 % increase in the total number of incidents attended (from 449 in 2015 to 456 in 2016).
 - 13.93 % decrease in the number of deliberate ASB secondary fires (from 201 in 2015 to 173 in 2016).
 - There were 9 attacks on fire-fighters in 2016, compared to 5 in 2015.
 - There were 4 firework related property fires in 2016, compared to 3 in 2015.
- 4.2 On 5th November, in order to reduce the demand on operational fire appliances, arrangements were made to place an 'incident assessment team' in each district. Each team consisted of a duty Group Manager and a Station Manager. Their role was to attend reported bonfires and assess whether an appliance was required to attend. In total, the teams were first in attendance at 7 incidents and requested an appliance to attend on 1 occasion, therefore preventing unnecessary appliance mobilisations. To help support business continuity, Group Managers were present in Fire Control and Police Control on the 4th and 5th November.
- 4.3 On the 4th and 5th November the Targeted Response Vehicles (TRV's) at Washington Community Fire Station were primary staffed from 1500-0000 hours to ensure frontline appliances were available for risk level one and two incidents. Between these hours the 4 TRV's attended 37 out of 96 secondary fires (accidental and deliberate). Between the 1st and 6th November, TRV's attended 77 out of 162 secondary fires (accidental and deliberate).

5 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

- 5.1 There were 9 reported attacks on firefighters in 2016, which sees an increase of 4 in comparison to 2015 and no injuries were sustained by firefighters over the 2016 bonfire period. We will always work with local partners and the Police to tackle these attacks.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The partnership approach to the bonfire period continues to be extremely successful in reducing the risk to the community.
- 6.2 It can be seen that the total number of calls received and the total number of incidents attended have increased. However, the total number of ASB secondary incidents attended has decreased.
- 6.3 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 In 2016, there were 9 attacks on firefighters which represents an increase from 2015; Prevention & Education (P&E) teams will continue to use the bonfire educational campaign to educate young people of the consequences.
- 6.5 The Bonfire campaign group have met to evaluate the campaign against its objectives and this evaluation will inform the planning for next year's campaign.

7 LOOK FORWARD: FUTURE SAFETY INITIATIVES

- 7.1 The P&E team continue to deliver locally devised intelligence led initiatives, whilst utilising the national 'Fire Kills' campaign to ensure maximum impact of our local safety messages.
- 7.2 Our Christmas campaign will be highlighting issues around fire, road and water safety. The 'Advent' Campaign will be communicated via social media and include press and media releases. The Service website page will also be updated to include up to date safety information and guidance for all safety messages.
- 7.3 Looking towards 2017, 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 Authorities. 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:

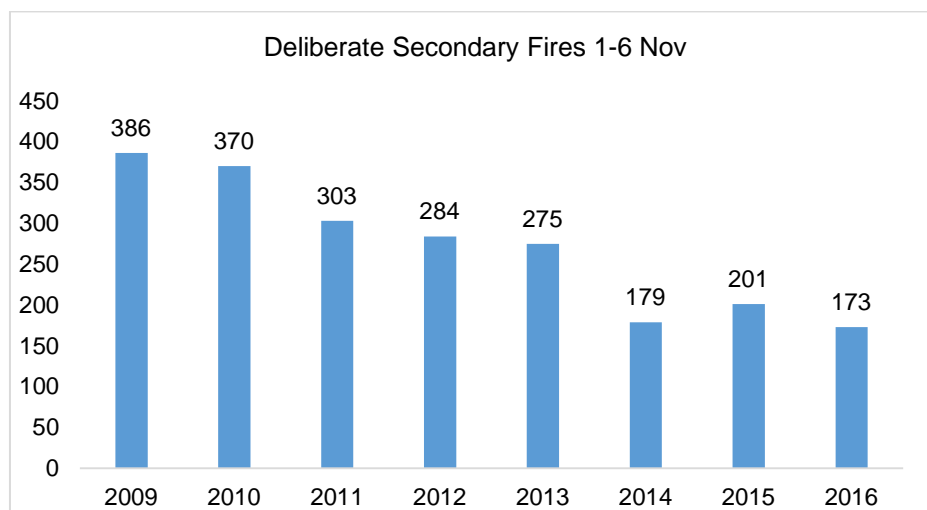
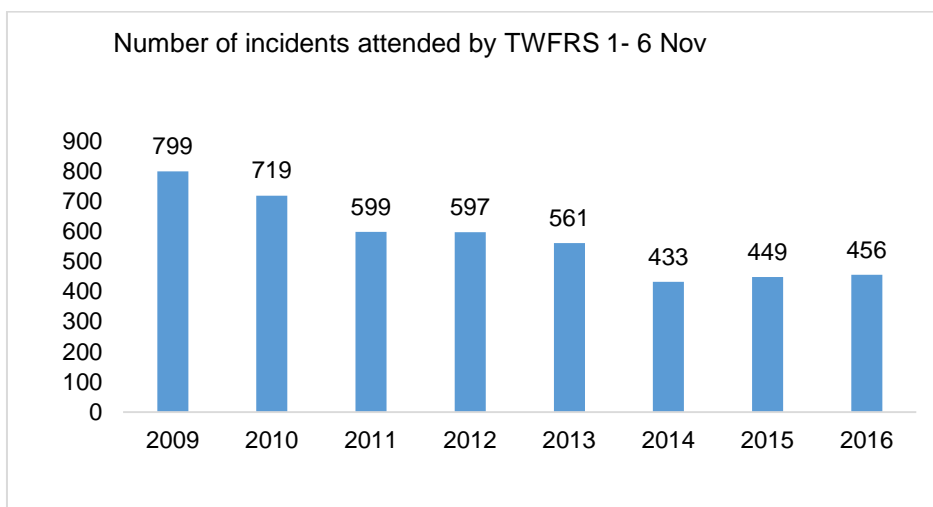
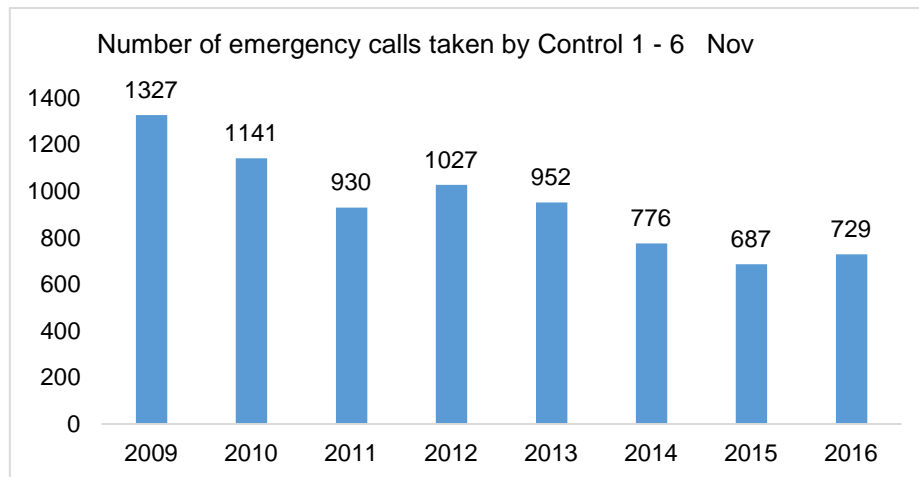
- a) Note the content of the report.
- b) Receive further reports as necessary.

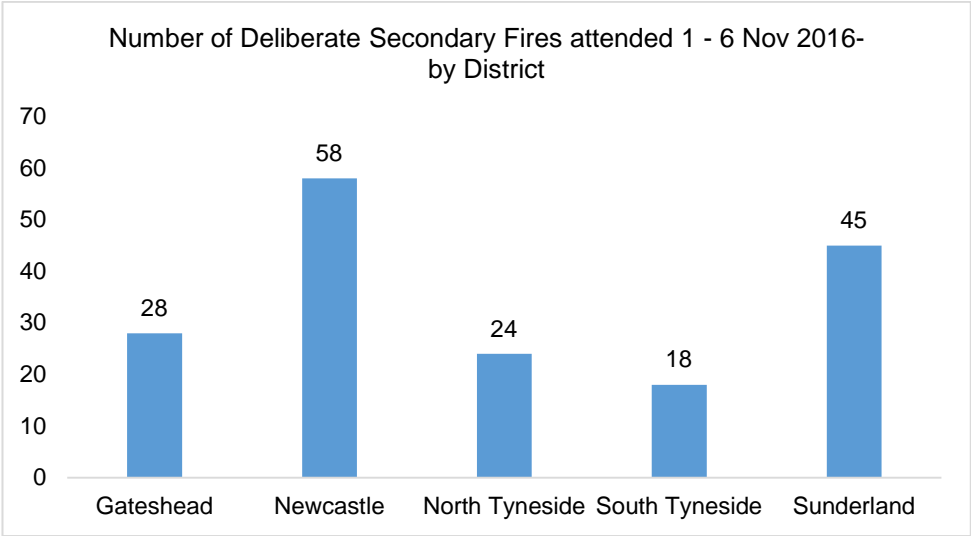
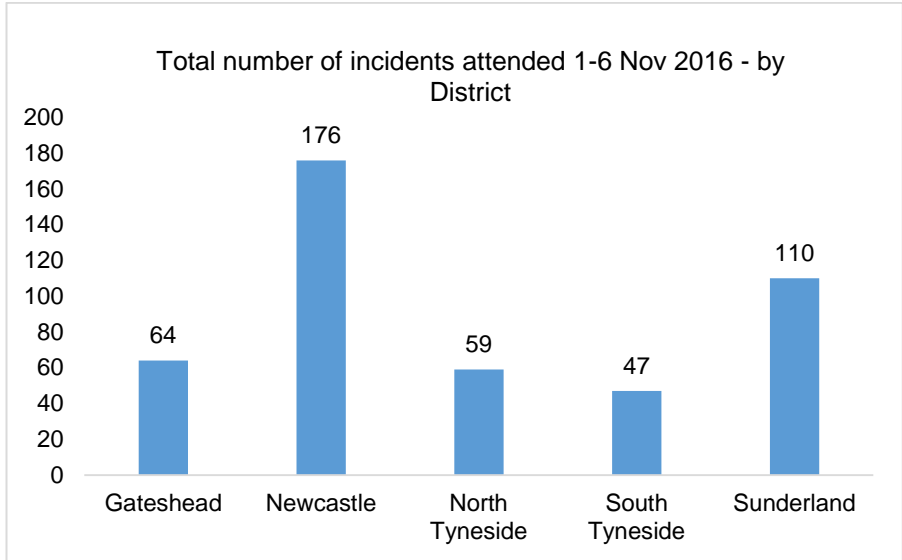
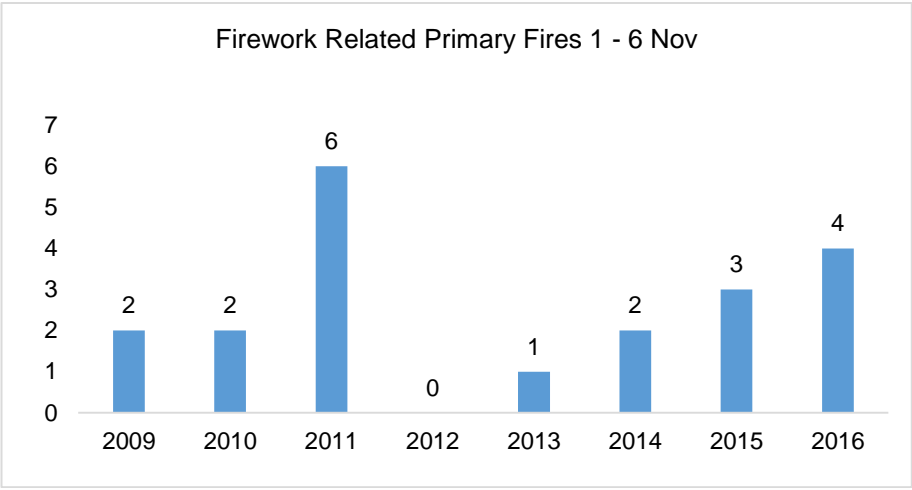
BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2015 Report” TWFRS
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2014 Report” TWFRS
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2013 Report” TWFRS
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2012 Report” TWFRS
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2011 Report” TWFRS
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2010 Report” TWFRS
“Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2009 Report” TWFRS

APPENDIX A – SERVICE INCIDENT STATISTICS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER





Number of uplifts of illegal bonfires and bonfire related materials, by district:

Table 1	Number of Uplifts						
Local Authority Area	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Duration of Uplifts (2016)
Gateshead	35	16	74	3	0*	137	01/11/16 - 05/11/16
Sunderland	148	48	121	62	77	32	01/11/16 – 05/11/16
Newcastle	562	426	769	430	518	300	01/11/16 – 05/11/16
South Tyneside	288	63	66	42	84	30	01/11/16 – 05/11/16
North Tyneside	49	42	28	106	34	22	01/11/16 – 05/11/16
TOTAL	1082	595	1058	643	713	583	

* Gateshead did not carry out uplifts due to funding and last years reported figures, they class pick-ups within business hours as core business

