

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 4

MEETING: 16TH DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: MERITORIOUS CONDUCT AWARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Meritorious Conduct Award Scheme provides the opportunity for Members of the Authority to recognise an individuals who perform commendable acts of bravery, gallantry or community actions.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is for the Authority to recognise the meritorious and brave actions taken by WM Andy Lane during a rescue from a house fire whilst off duty.

2 AWARD NOTIFICATION

- 2.1 At the commencement of today's meeting, the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Tom Wright, will present a Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority Award for Brave and Meritorious Conduct to WM Andy Lane in recognition of his actions in rescuing a member of the public from a house fire whilst off duty.

3 INCIDENT DETAILS

- 3.1 At approximately 1650 hours on the 21st November 2013, whilst off duty, WM Andy Lane left his home in Highfield, Gateshead to collect an item from his car which was parked at the bottom of the terrace.
- 3.2 As he walked down the hill and approached 2 Margaret Terrace he became aware of an orange glow from the sitting room window, at first he thought it was a wood burning stove but soon realised that a fire was developing within the living room.
- 3.3 WM Lane attempted to force entry to the front door by kicking the door and instructed a neighbour who had heard the noise to dial 999. The first call was received at 1652 hours and two appliances mobilised from Swalwell Community Fire Station.
- 3.4 Having been unable to gain access WM Lane went to the back of the property and tried to gain access via the rear door. This was also locked and could not be forced. He then broke the kitchen window and, as he could see a casualty in

the premises, was in the process of trying to climb through the window when a relative of the tenant arrived with a key for the rear door.

- 3.5 WM Lane opened the door, entered the smoke filled kitchen and was met with resistance from the heat, smoke and the casualty initially refusing to leave. WM Lane persuaded the casualty to leave the premises and rescued her from the lobby between the kitchen and the living room. All doors downstairs in the premises were open and the fire was still developing in the living room.
- 3.6 Once the casualty had been rescued WM Lane dialled 999 at 1655 hours and informed Control who he was, requested that the incident be upgraded to 'Persons Reported' and also that a casualty had been rescued and that an ambulance was required.
- 3.7 Three appliances attended the incident, extinguished the fire and ventilated the premises. The subsequent fire investigation found that there had been a significant fire in the living room area involving a three seater settee that had developed to the extent of exposing the laths in the ceiling and igniting the timber joists above. The heat and smoke had caused the treads on the staircase to heat up to a point of near ignition and smoke had filled the entire ground and first floor.
- 3.8 WM Lane acted selflessly with courage and great professionalism to rescue the tenant of the premises without the support or equipment that firefighters rely on to deal with such incidents.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Authority is recommended to:
 - a) Endorse the Meritorious Conduct Award for WM Andy Lane
 - b) Congratulate and thank WM Lane for his actions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Meritorious Conduct Policy