Annual Report

Statement of Assurance

2014/15

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Appendix A – Details of last year's performance

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's Annual Report / Statement of Assurance for 2014/15. As always, we have produced this report to let you know how we did during 2014/15, how much we spent and what we spent it on. This document also meets the requirement placed on us by Government as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2012, to prepare an annual Statement of Assurance:

> ***'Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance'.***

One of the principal aims of the annual report is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and our partners may make a valid assessment of our performance.

We set targets to enable us to monitor our performance enabling us to achieve our vision of 'creating the safest community'. By monitoring our performance we are able to see how we are progressing towards achieving our strategic goals.

During 2014/15 we attended a total of 14,501 incidents with an average response time of 5 minutes 12 seconds. We also achieved a 19% reduction in injuries from accidental dwelling fires and a 1.5% reduction in primary (property) fires recording our lowest ever figures and an 18% reduction in deliberate secondary (e.g. rubbish) fires. More details about our performance are set out in the report.

Under the Government's Spending Review we continue to face significant reductions in the grant we receive from the Government. This creates a huge challenge in continuing to tackle community risk with fewer resources. Although this will be difficult, our committed workforce will continue to focus upon positive outcomes for the communities we serve.

This report has been prepared to provide you with assurance on our finances, governance and operations throughout 2014/15 and as always we would welcome your comments. Instructions on how to contact us are in Section 13.

Include photos and signatures of:

Councillor Tom Wright
Chairman

Tom Capeling
Chief Fire Officer

OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

Our vision for the community will be achieved by providing the people of Tyne and Wear with the services they need, to the highest possible standard. Our vision statement is:

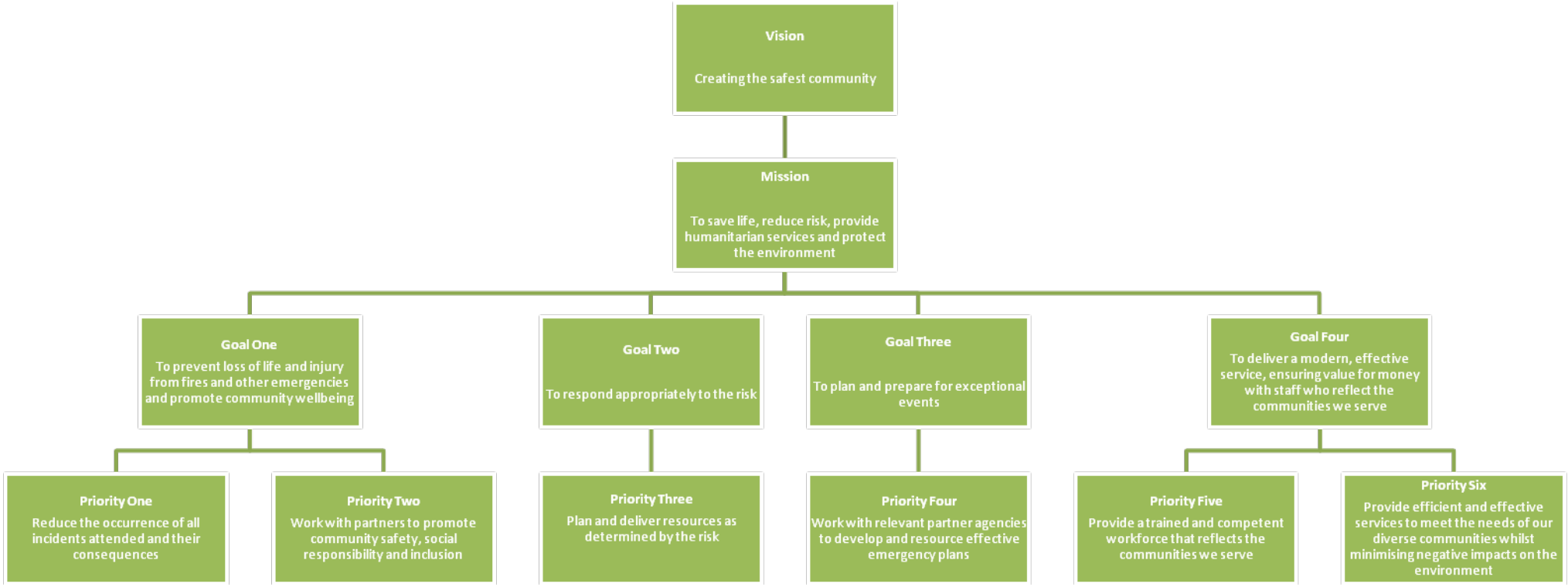
“Creating the safest community”

To enable us to achieve this vision, we have a mission:

“To save life, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services and protect the environment”

We have four goals which support the achievement of our vision and mission and these are underpinned by six priorities which are aligned to the needs of our communities.

The following diagram demonstrates the link from our vision to our goals and priorities.


Vision
Creating the safest community
Mission
To save life, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services and protect the environment
Goal One
To prevent loss of life and injury from fires and other emergencies and promote community wellbeing
Goal Two
To respond appropriately to the risk
Goal Three
To plan and prepare for exceptional events
Goal Four
To deliver a modern, effective service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the communities we serve
Priority One
Reduce the occurrence of all incidents attended and their consequences
Priority Two
Work with partners to promote community safety, social responsibility and inclusion
Priority Three
Plan and deliver resources as determined by the risk
Priority Four
Work with relevant partner agencies to develop and resource effective emergency plans
Priority Five
Provide a trained and competent workforce that reflects the communities we serve
Priority Six
Provide efficient and effective services to meet the needs of our diverse communities whilst minimising negative impacts on the environment

To achieve our vision we must ensure that the services we provide:

- are **well managed** - employees are expected to manage the areas for which they are responsible within budget

- aim for **excellence in service provision** taking account of stakeholders' views

- work **in effective partnership** with the communities we represent, and external organisations.

We also recognise that all employees need to have a clear understanding about our working practices, and the core values required for long term success.

Everyone within the Authority has a responsibility for ensuring these values are implemented and upheld:

Core Values

We value service to the community by:
- working with all groups to reduce risk
- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- being answerable to those we serve
- striving for excellence

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by:
- accepting responsibility for our performance
- being open minded
- considering criticism thoughtfully
- learning from our experience
- consulting others

We value all our employees by practising and promoting:
- fairness and respect
- recognition of merit
- honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- personal development
- co-operative and inclusive working

We value diversity in the Service and community by:
- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- promoting equal opportunities in employment within the Service
- challenging prejudice and discrimination

We are committed to diversity and equality. Our policies and procedures are continually reviewed to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for everyone. We achieved the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework 'excellent' standard and in 2014/15 received the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Award for 'Building Inclusive Workplaces'.

These awards demonstrate our commitment to employing a diverse workforce to ensure we reflect the communities we serve.

OUR SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

Last year we carried out over 30,000 home safety checks (HSC) in Tyne and Wear and over the same period we responded to over 14,000 emergency calls. Our focus sees prevention and protection being as important as response and this has helped us to drive down fires over a number of years, keeping the community safer.

Our approach to delivering services is strongly risk based. We work hard to understand community risk and this informs our day to day work (such as targeting HSCs at those most vulnerable), or when we make changes to the Service through the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) (see section 9).

Prevention

We believe the most effective way to save lives, reduce injuries and other losses through fire and other emergencies is to reduce the number of incidents that occur. This is done by focusing on risk reduction for vulnerable people and by raising awareness of risk with the wider community.

Accidental fires in the home are the main cause of fire deaths and we do all we can to reduce these fatalities. Our Community Safety teams work to educate people about what they can do to protect themselves from fire. We do this by:

- Delivering Home Safety Checks - where firefighters or our partners visit people in their homes to give advice on fire safety and fitting smoke alarms
- Working with a range of partners both formally and informally to ensure the safety and protection of our community. This enables us to reach and protect people we know are most at risk from fires. We continue to work with partners to promote and support the use of domestic sprinklers
- Educating people at a young age about the dangers of fire, how they can protect themselves and the consequences of making hoax calls
- Reducing fires started deliberately. We have specialist staff to tackle fire setting behaviour by young people and work with partners to reduce fire related crime.

In May 2014 the Prevention and Education Team, Newcastle received a referral from an operational member of staff regarding an older wheelchair user in poor health who lived alone. The property had numerous fire risk factors.

With the occupiers consent, the Prevention and Education Team made a referral to First Contact and subsequently several partner agencies became involved.

The outcome for the occupier was a positive one which saw them living more safely and independently in their own and TWFRS promoting collaborative working amongst our partners.

Protection

Our Fire Safety team is dedicated to the statutory provision of fire safety in all premises other than single private dwellings.

The team enforces the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, a piece of legislation which applies to virtually any premises other than a domestic one. This legislation is commonly known as the Fire Safety Order and places the duty on the Responsible Person ensuring a safe property for persons.

The Fire Safety team help us meet the Authority's statutory duty by carrying out a risk based inspection programme of all premises covered by the Fire Safety Order throughout the five local authority areas in Tyne and Wear. This ensures that premises presenting the highest risk and lowest compliance are audited and inspected more frequently than those considered to be of a lower risk and higher compliance**.**

Advice on fire safety in the workplace is also provided. Employers are responsible for ensuring staff know what to do, to prevent a fire in the workplace and how to escape if a fire does occur.

Responding to emergencies

Despite all the work our Fire Safety and Prevention and Education teams undertake, we acknowledge that emergencies will still occur, and responding to them is core to our activities.

We do not just deal with fires. Our skilled firefighters are provided with the training and equipment to deal with a huge range of incidents and rescues. This enables them to deal with fires and road traffic collisions on a daily basis. Other incidents we attend include rescues, dealing with the consequences of flooding, making buildings safe and dealing with chemical and other hazardous materials.

Whether fighting fires, performing rescues, carrying out humanitarian services or protecting the environment, our firefighters are supported by highly trained and skilled control room staff who coordinate the response to all incidents, as well as providing expert advice and guidance to the public in emergency situations.

These services are delivered by our operational response staff who are based at 17 strategically located community fire stations throughout the Tyne and Wear area. 14 of these stations are staffed by whole-time duty system (full time) crews, one station by retained duty system (part time) crews and two by Day Crewing Close Call (DCCC) system (a flexible shift system which is effective in areas of lower incidents and risk), this staffing system was introduced at Birtley in 2012 and Rainton Bridge in 2014.

More information regarding the Service structure and our people is available on our website: www.twfire.gov.uk.

Mutual aid

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority has mutual aid arrangements in place with our neighbouring fire and rescue authorities in Northumberland and Durham and Darlington. This means we offer each other support in specific circumstances including very large incidents.

National Resilience

The National Resilience programme is an essential part of Government arrangements to protect the national infrastructure in the event of catastrophic incidents. It has provided us with Mass Decontamination Modules, a High Volume Pumping Unit, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and a Detection Identification and Monitoring (DIM) capability, all of which enhance our ability to respond to major emergencies such as terrorist attacks, industrial and domestic accidents and natural disasters.

Collaboration with Partners

Partners help us deliver our services and achieve our vision of ‘creating the safest community’. An example of this is our collaboration with Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council (GMBC) where Care Call staff have been trained to carry out HSCs on our behalf. In 2014/15 Care Call delivered a total of 5,087 HSCs ensuring the vulnerable people in Gateshead are safer in their homes. We have similar arrangements with other housing companies across Tyne and Wear.

Operational Assurance

Every organisation aims to improve the way it operates, whether that means increasing its efficiency, managing risk more effectively or improving upon delivery of its service.

In addition to this, the Health & Safety Guidance Document, HSG 65 ‘Successful Health & Safety Management’ states that organisations should have suitable monitoring systems in place to provide information to individuals, line managers and system owners in order to feedback and influence decision making processes.

Our Operational Assurance process underpins the application of the Safe Person Concept and contributes towards 'creating the safest community' and the safety of firefighters. This includes regular performance and review of all aspects of operational performance throughout the FRS. The review process seeks to validate the information gathered on operational performance at incidents and training events, verifying and measuring the level of compliance with Standard Operating Procedures and Incident Management Systems.

Staff from across the Service participate in this process which also includes learning from incidents which occurred in other fire and rescue services, including learning from notices issued by the Health and Safety Executive or Coroner.

LAST YEAR'S PERFORMANCE

This section highlights what we set out to deliver in our Strategic Community Safety Plan and District Plans and how well we performed against these key objectives and targets.

Our performance is divided into two sections in order to provide a comprehensive overview based on national and local priorities:

SERVICE LED PRIORITIES:

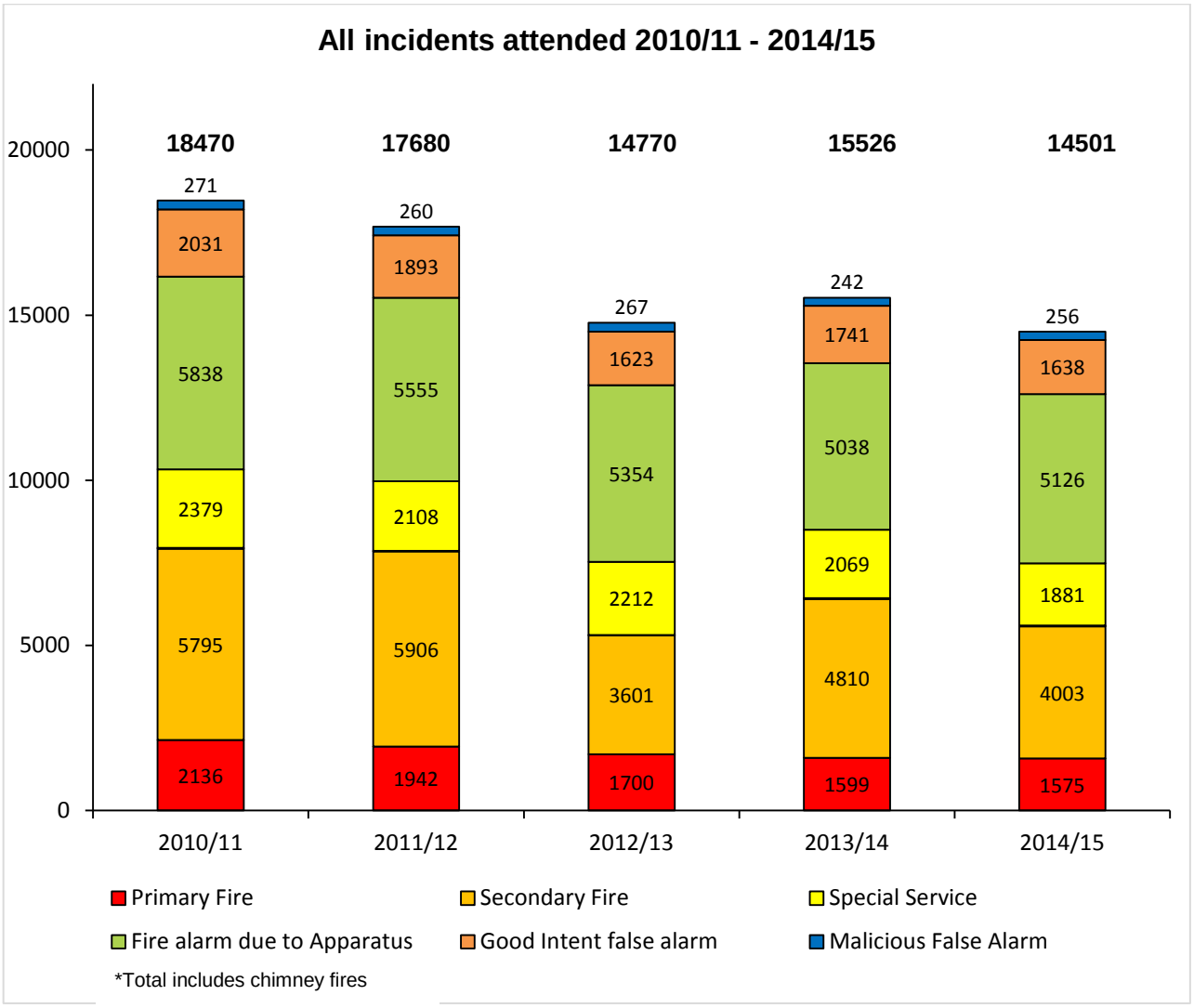
These reflect the Service led performance indicators as defined by the Government. Although these are no longer reported nationally, they are used as a priority by fire and rescue services and allow continuity of performance reporting.

A primary fire is a fire that involves buildings, vehicles and / or injuries. All other types of fire are classified as secondary fires.

- Number of fatalities from all fires **(LI 2)**
- Number of injuries from accidental dwelling fires, excluding precautionary checks **(LI 3)**
- Number of accidental fires in dwellings **(LI 8)**
- Number of deliberate secondary fires **(LI 16)**
- Number of false alarms due to automatic fire detection from non-domestic properties **(LI 22)**.
- Number of false alarms due to automatic fire detection from domestic properties **(LI 23)**
- Number of primary fires **(LI 29)**
- Number of deliberate fires **(LI 33).**

Overall we have continued to reduce the number of incidents we attend. During 2014/15 we saw a decrease in deliberate fires compared with 2013/14 which has led to an overall decrease in the number of fires attended.

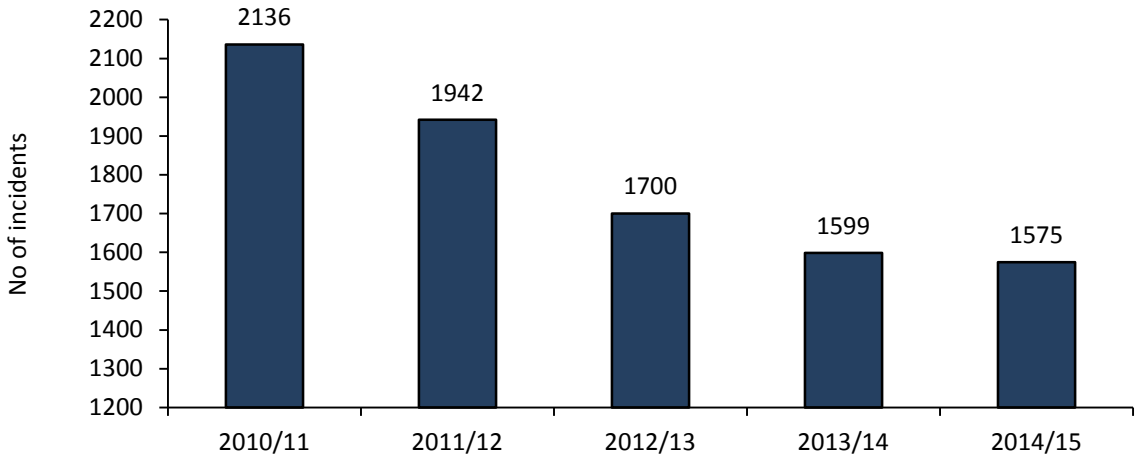
Over the next few pages we give some details of how the incidents we have attended are categorised.


All incidents attended 2010/11 - 2014/15
18470
17680
14770
15526
14501
271
260
267
242
256
2031
1893
1623
1741
1638
5838
5555
5354
5038
5126
2379
2108
2212
2069
1881
5795
5906
3601
4810
4003
2136
1942
1700
1599
1575
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
2010/11
2011/12
2012/13
2013/14
2014/15
Primary Fire
Secondary Fire
Special Service
Fire alarm due to Apparatus
Good Intent false alarm
Malicious False Alarm
*Total includes chimney fires

Primary fires attended (LI29)

The chart below shows the reduction that we have seen in primary fires over the last five years. 2014/15 saw primary fires reduce by 24 (1.5%) when compared to the previous year. As a result we recorded our lowest ever figure in this area. We have also seen year on year improvement for the last seven years.

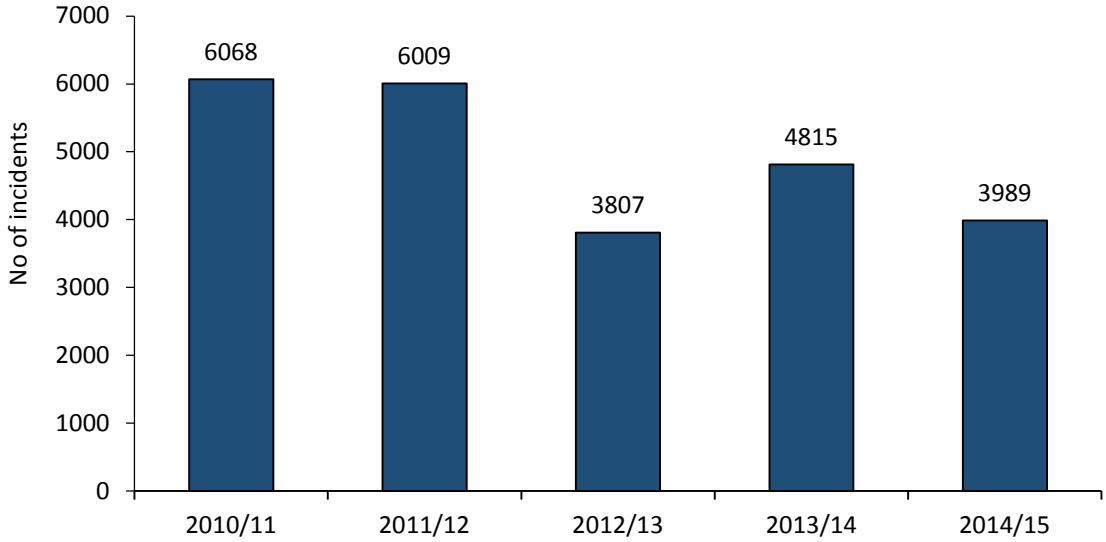
Primary fires attended 2010/11 - 2014/15



All deliberate fires (LI33) and deliberate secondary fires (LI16)

During 2014/15 we attended 3,989 deliberate fires, this is a substantial reduction of 826 (17.2%) in comparison to last year and shows a 34.3% reduction over the last five years. Of the 3,989 deliberate fires 3,444 were deliberate secondary fires

LI33 Service Performance



We continue to work with local authorities to implement a number of initiatives in order to reduce the number of these incidents by removing potential sources of ignition. Further work includes collaboration with partners and multi-agency forums, primarily with the Police and local authorities. It also includes intelligence sharing

and providing information on properties at risk, securing voids and uplifting abandoned vehicles. There is also engagement with the local community, secondary schools and Youth Offending Services to tackle issues regarding anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire setting.

Fatalities from all fires (LI 2)

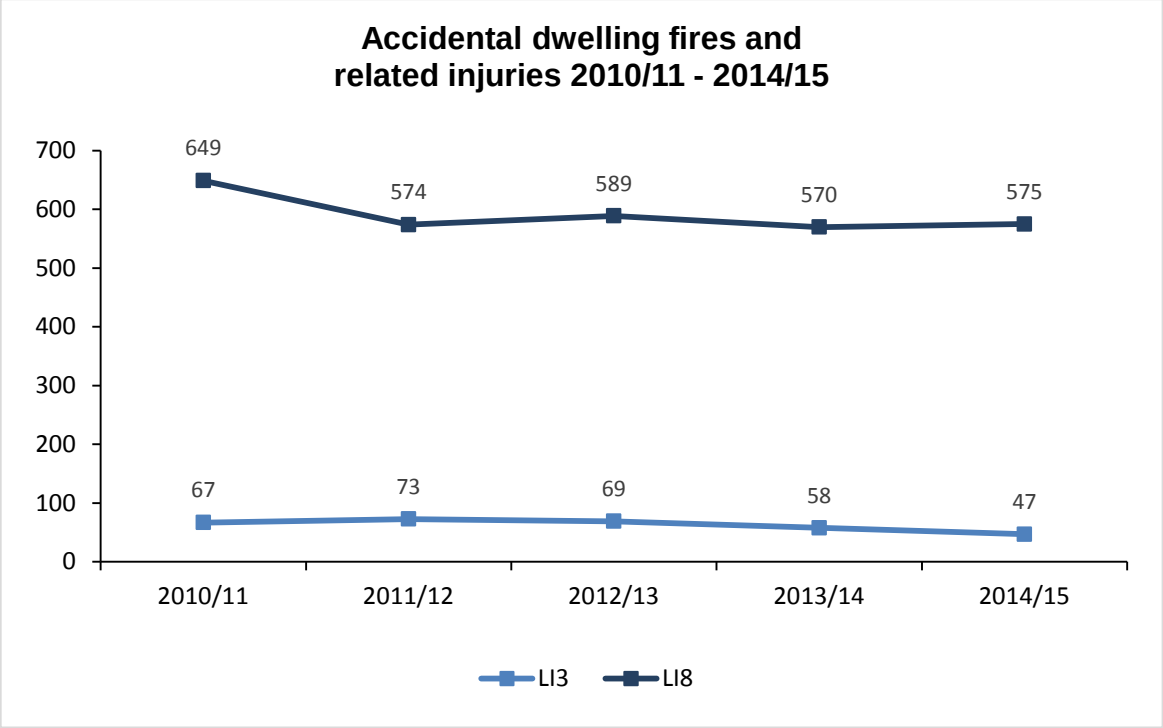
Sadly there were three fatalities from all fires (one of which was a fatatlity from an accidental dwelling fire) during 2014/15. Despite this we continue to have the lowest number of fatalities from all fires compared to the other metropolitan fire and rescue services.

We are actively taking steps to ensure we reduce the risk of deaths from accidental fires by continuing to refine our targeting of prevention and education work, improving the use of our data to understand current risk and by using community advocates, volunteers and operational staff to improve intelligence and provide a better understanding of our communities and also improving our targeting through working with partners.

Accidental Dwelling Fires (LI8) and injuries from accidental dwelling fires, excluding precautionary checks (LI3)

Although we aim to reduce all incident types, the reduction in the number of accidental fires in the home is a priority for us, reflecting the delivery of HSCs which aim to reduce incidents and related injuries.

In 2014/15 we attended 575 accidental dwelling fires, which is a very slight increase of 0.9% from the previous year. At the same time we recorded 47 injuries from accidental dwelling fires (excluding precautionary checks), this is a reduction of 19% in comparison to the previous year. Of the 47 injuries 4 were classed as serious. This is the lowest number of injuries from accidental dwelling fires (excluding precautionary checks) we have historically recorded.



Sources of Ignition

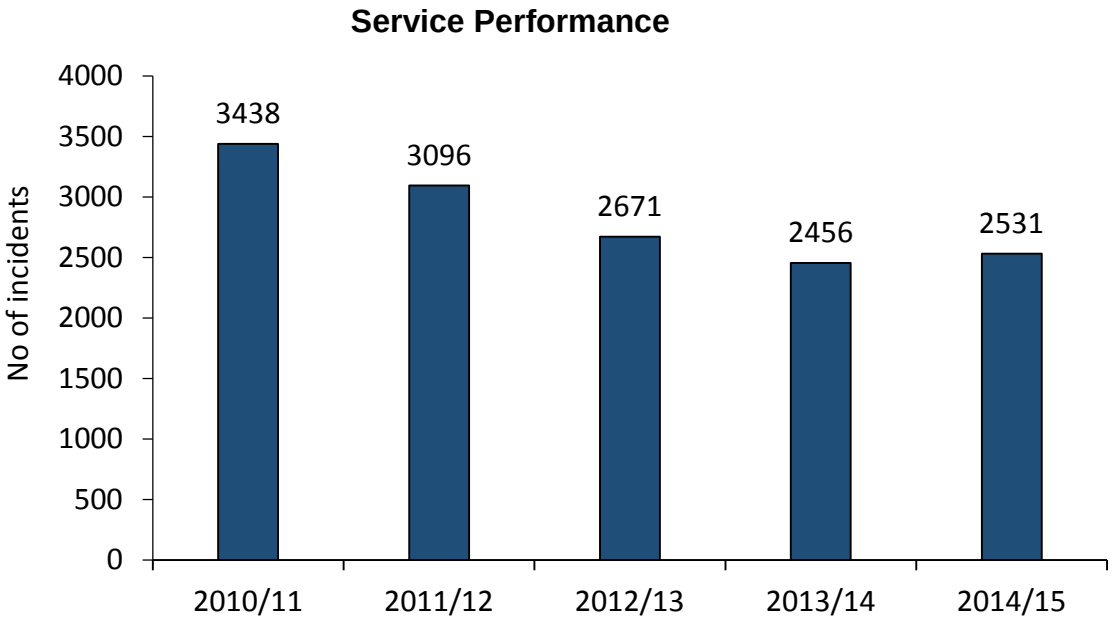
The following table highlights the key sources of ignition that contribute to the number of attendances to accidental house fires.

Source of Ignition	Total
Cooking appliance - Cooker incl. oven	241
Electricity supply - Wiring, cabling, plugs	55
Cooking appliance - Grill/Toaster	42
Smoking related - Smoking materials	36
Cooking appliance - Microwave oven	29
Heating equipment - Heating/Fire	20
Cooking appliance - Ring/hot plate (separate appliance)	18
Matches and candles - Candles	18
Not known	15
Other domestic style appliance - Washing machine	11
Other source of ignition	90
Grand Total	**575**

The main source of ignition continues to be from a cooker, with accidental kitchen fires accounting for 69% of all accidental dwelling fires in 2014/15.

The table above also highlights that a large proportion of such incidents are caused by electricity (including, wiring, cables and plugs) and careless use of smoking materials. These areas of concern are all addressed during a HSC. 30,652 HSCs were undertaken by TWFRS staff in 2014/15 and more were carried out by our local social housing partners and care at home providers who have been trained to carry out these checks on our behalf.

Number of false alarms due to automatic fire detection from non-domestic properties (LI 22).



During 2014/15 we attended 2,531 false alarms due to automatic fire detection from non-domestic properties. A non-domestic premise can be classified as a non-residential property, for example a public building, hospital, school and factory.

This reflects our despatch to an address as a result of a call being activated by automatic fire detection equipment or fixed firefighting equipment. Our performance for 2014/15 showed a 3% increase on the previous year however we are showing a 26% reduction over the last five years.

Hospitals and medical care continue to be the main premises type for these incidents accounting for 16% of the total. Our Fire Safety teams continue to work with occupiers of non-domestic properties to drive down the occurrence of false alarms.

The following table highlights the top ten non domestic property types we have attended due to automatic false alarms.

False alarms to non-domestic property	Total
Hospitals and medical care	405
Education	380
Retail	317
Offices and call centres	256
Residential Home	187
Industrial Manufacturing	174
Entertainment and culture	139
Food and Drink	118
Student Hall of Residence	88
Warehouses and bulk storage	77

Number of false alarms due to automatic fire detection from domestic properties (LI 23).

During 2014/15 we attended 2567 false alarms due to automatic fire detection from domestic properties. Of these incidents 46% were caused by cooking / burnt toast, this has been the main cause for the last six years.

Responding to false alarms does not offer value for money and diverts resources that could otherwise be used at incidents or delivering community safety activities. Our Fire Safety teams continue to work with partners and property owners with a view to further reducing occurrences of these incidents.

One of the main factors for reducing our attendance at false alarms has been the successful introduction of call challenge procedures. This procedure sees partners filtering monitored fire alarm actuations in their properties during agreed times. This work has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of appliances responding to automatic false alarm. In addition to our call challenge procedures, on 1 June 2015 we changed the way we responded to some fire alarms; TWFRS no longer automatically respond to investigate AFA calls to non-residential premises between 0800 – 1800hrs. Further information is available via our website www.twfire.gov.uk.

FURTHER PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS IN 2014/15

Over the last year TWFRS has also achieved significant reductions in other areas thus complementing our priority indicators.

Our performance for 2014/15 is further supported by the key outcomes highlighted below:

- 9% (188) fewer **Special Services** – these are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer eg. Road Traffic Collision

- 13% (836) fewer **fire calls attended**

OTHER INCIDENTS

We deal with a range of other incidents beyond fire, and have made significant changes over recent years in order to adapt to local and national risks. The table below highlights the range of special service incidents that we have attended over the last five years.

Service Rendered	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
RTC	353	370	387	331	331
No action (not false alarm)	488	351	309	283	303
Effecting entry/exit	162	142	192	177	179
Lift Release	177	197	194	202	138
Flooding	155	116	319	200	132
Suicide/attempts	95	109	64	100	117
Animal assistance incidents	109	124	95	111	97
Removal of objects from people	77	81	74	79	87
Assist other agencies	91	85	72	97	81
Making Safe (not RTC)	253	114	87	89	75
Other rescue/release of persons	175	179	99	96	70
Medical Incident - First responder	38	41	43	43	56
Hazardous Materials incident	27	22	36	35	45
Spills and Leaks (not RTC)	90	70	58	50	37
Evacuation (no fire)	18	19	57	43	33
Removal of people from objects	0	0	35	26	28
Other Transport incident	14	19	12	18	18
Rescue or evacuation from water	15	19	37	29	16
Advice Only	24	27	20	26	15
Stand By	18	22	13	22	13
Medical Incident - Co-responder	0	0	9	12	8
Water provision	0	1	0	0	2
Total	**2379**	**2108**	**2212**	**2069**	**1881**

Over the last five years the number of special service calls has reduced by 21%, although attendance at incidents, as highlighted above, can be determined by a number of factors outside our control, including extreme weather conditions. This is evident through the increase in the number of incidents attended involving flooding in 2012/13.

Further details on our performance can be found in Appendix A at the end of this report. This shows our progress against the targets set out in our Strategic Community Safety Plan.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

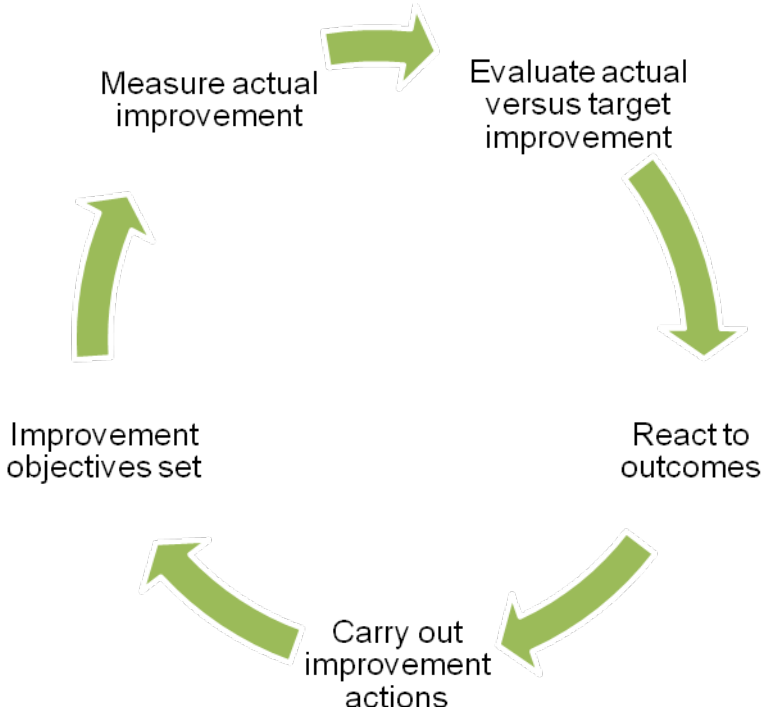
Through the delivery of our goals, priorities, strategies and plans we are able to ensure that our front line services work towards our overall vision and mission. However, it is through our frameworks and processes that we ensure the services we provide are monitored and scrutinised to provide continuous improvement.

Performance Action Groups (PAG), which address performance at a district and Service level continue to meet to monitor performance and identify areas for improvement by directing resources and establishing priorities with effective delivery of initiatives and projects. The impact of this work is supported through the delivery of HSCs.

Performance is scrutinised quarterly by the Strategic Management Team and the Authority's Policy and Performance Committee.

The framework highlighted below demonstrates how we monitor, evaluate and deliver improvement to our communities.

Performance Improvement Framework



The stages of the Performance Improvement Framework are detailed below:

- **Improvement objectives and targets are set**
  On an annual basis we review our current objectives and look for evidence of improvements against these objectives. As a result of this process we establish priorities for monitoring throughout the year.

- **Measure actual improvement**
  We have developed our own Performance Management System in order to measure the improvement and progress of performance throughout the year. The Performance Management System enables us to measure and monitor specific improvements in each of our five districts and 17 stations. Through the use of real time data we are able to measure our performance more effectively.

- **Evaluate actual versus target improvement**
  The Performance Management System supports us in monitoring performance on a daily basis and reporting it on a quarterly basis. The performance improvement process allows for the reports and actions to be scrutinised and evaluated to ensure targets and outcomes are being delivered in order to achieve continuous improvement. Our district and station managers increase the effectiveness of performance management in our Service Delivery function.

- **React to outcomes**
  Improved communications enable us to pass on our actions and outcomes more effectively. A structured monitoring and review process allows us to share our messages and actions more clearly and efficiently. This process is enhanced through team briefings, management meetings and performance action groups.

- **Carry out improvement actions**
  Our structure enables the effective management of improvement actions; driving accountability for our improvement actions to the various management levels within the Authority. Improvement actions include preventative work for example, carrying out HSCs.

The performance improvement process enables us to ensure that the framework is implemented successfully. Despite success in our performance over recent years we recognise that we cannot be complacent and we are committed to further improvement through innovative working and exploring further partnerships.

Improvement opportunities also arise as a result of audits, internal reviews, consultation activities and external accreditations. The learning and improvement actions from such activities are included on an organisation wide Improvement Plan which is regularly monitored and reported.

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Our Strategic Community Safety Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan are now combined. Producing a single document is clearer and more efficient, and ensures that our plans are clearly linked to an understanding of risk.

The Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process is the vehicle we use to make significant changes to the shape of the Service, ensuring that services are planned, designed and delivered in a way that balances available resources and community risk. This is a national process required of us under the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

IRMP proposals are developed on a four year rolling programme to enable medium term planning and consultation with staff, partners and communities. The current series of IRMP actions (agreed as a programme in October 2012, and covering the period 2013-17) is as follows:

- Review of operational response model
- Review of staffing profiles
- Review of diversionary activities
- Review of catering
- Review of cleaning
- Feasibility of a Trading Company
- Introduction of second Day Crewing Close Call station (Rainton Bridge- from previous IRMP)

Two additional actions were agreed in November 2014, to be carried out over 2014-17:

- Carry out an Organisational and Management Review
- Explore further joint working with other emergency services and key partners

A significant amount of work has been undertaken on IRMP actions, with most reviews complete. A number have been agreed by the Authority and are moving into the implementation stage (with the implementation of the Response review running into 2018). Progress is as follows:

Review of operational response model

Following this review, in 2014 the Fire Authority agreed changes to the operational response in Tyne and Wear and these are being implemented over a three year period. The plan includes:

- Crew appliances at stations with one fire appliance with four staff
- Remove six main fire appliances across the service (a reduction from 30 to 24)
- Introduce two Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) for lower risk incident 24/7
- Introduce two additional TRV to be dual staffed at night and as required
- Remove two fire appliances for up to 12 hours at night
- Reduce Aerial Ladder Platforms from three to two
- Invest in new fire-fighting technologies to enhance performance and Firefighter safety.

Phase 1 of the implementation process (June 2014 to May 2015) included:

- The removal of two main appliances from Swalwell and Wallsend. This is complete; the appliances were removed from the fleet in June 2014, and the impact of the change is being monitored. Staffing numbers have been reduced accordingly through natural wastage

- The implementation of Day Crewing Close Call at Rainton Bridge introduced in June 2014

- Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) were trailed in January 2015 and subsequently introduced in May 2015.

- Standing down two appliances at night

Monitoring and review is taking place throughout the life of the plan with reports prepared and presented to Authority.

Review of diversionary activities

The findings of the review were presented to the Fire Authority in March 2014, with a further paper agreed in November 2014 following a period of additional discussions with partners; this established commitment to ongoing funding for Safetyworks!, Phoenix and Prince's Trust.

The Authority agreed to continue to fund Safetyworks!, Phoenix and Prince's Trust as part of its wider approach to Prevention (based on the principle that such activities with wider impact than fire and rescue should continue to be co-funded or commissioned).

The Chief Fire Officer undertook to continue monitoring the sustainability of these activities and seeking further collaboration with partners in the coming years.

Review of Catering

The Authority gave outline approval to a new approach and structure for Catering in January 2014. Following a period of formal consultation with staff, final agreement to a new structure was given in July 2014 and was fully implemented by April 2015.

Review of Cleaning

This review has been completed and was presented to the Authority in December 2014; approval was granted to keep the cleaning service in-house with some modest changes to how it was delivered.

Feasibility of a Trading Company

Following review a trading company, Impeller Assurance and Resilience Ltd (Impeller) was launched in April 2015. Impeller is a social enterprise working in close collaboration with TWFRS to deliver excellence in safety, resilience and business performance.

Organisational Review

In November 2014, the Authority agreed that a wide ranging Organisational and Management Review should be carried out covering all levels of staff and incorporating a review of management. This work is currently in progress.

Explore further joint working with other emergencies services and key partners

In November 2014, the Authority also agreed that a review should be carried out to build on existing arrangements and explore what further efficiencies can be drawn from collaborative relationships.

All partners consulted about this proposal indicated a willingness to work together to explore opportunities. Initial meetings have been held with Northumbria Police and North East Ambulance Service to begin scoping what opportunities can be explored.

The Authority have agreed in principle to co-location arrangements for Northumbria Police neighbourhood policing staff at community fire stations at Birtley, Chopwell, Farringdon, Hebburn and Sunderland Central.

The co-location presents a real opportunity for us to significantly develop and enhance our collaborative working across a number of areas of mutual interest e.g. fire and crime prevention.

Following a successful joint bid, funding to carry out the building works has come from central Government.

Subject to final approval, work to carry out any necessary building adaptations is due to begin in phases in the summer with us welcoming the first of our colleagues onto our stations from Northumbria Police by September 2015.

IRMP Consultation

The IRMP actions are subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders including members of the public, local strategic partners, ward councillors, MPs, local businesses, partner organisations and representative bodies.

OUR PLANS

In order to effectively deliver our services, we have developed a number of high level plans and strategies that direct and support the work of our individual functions.

The highest level plan is the Strategic Community Safety Plan 2013–2018, this Plan is combined with our Integrated Risk Management Plan and features our Community Risk Profile. It sets out the planned inputs, outputs and outcomes in relation to each of the key areas of Service. In doing this, it defines our contribution towards driving down risk to the public of Tyne and Wear. In essence it sets out our:

- medium term priorities
- methods to drive down risk and deliver services effectively
- actions for the year ahead, and
- performance targets and indicators.

Our other key documents include:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Value for Money Framework
- Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan
- Improvement Plan
- HR Strategy
- Learning & Development Delivery Strategy
- Corporate Procurement Strategy
- Equality Strategy

Further details of all of these documents can be found on our website: www.twfire.gov.uk.

Our operational activities are governed by a range of standard operating procedures which are followed by all staff.

Consulting on our Plans

We recognise the need to seek the views, opinions and involvement of others in the delivery of our services. Where appropriate, this includes employees, Authority Members, members of the public, other stakeholders and community groups.

A formal Consultation Policy sets out how we will engage with our stakeholders and consult on the issues which affect them. This will provide us with information at the beginning of the decision-making process, enabling this information to influence our plans and strategies.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

The Authority's External Auditors, Mazars, give an annual opinion on our financial statements and whether we have in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources (the Value for Money conclusion). The annual audit letter for 2013/14 was received in November 2014, and indicates that:

- The Authority has managed its financial position well. Budget setting is robust and close monitoring ensured delivery of spending within budget. The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out how the Authority proposes to deal with the difficult economic climate and funding cuts

- Careful financial management has enabled the Authority to build up a good level of earmarked reserves that are set aside for specific plans and projects

Specific aspects of our Service are also subject to regular review by Internal Audit provided by Sunderland City Council. The results of these audits are reported to the Governance Committee and available on our website.

We undertake an on-going 'After the Incident Survey' which seeks the views of those who have used our services. The latest results of this survey recorded overall satisfaction scores of 100% with regard to the services we provide at domestic incidents and 98% at non-domestic incidents.

Our Other Achievements

We have been successful in achieving several awards and accreditations in the last year. These include:

- Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge 2014
- Investors in People Gold Standard maintained
- ROSPA Gold accreditation for the ninth consecutive year
- Accreditation to International Standard ISO22301:2012 for Business Continuity
- National Resilience Assurance Team Multi Capability Assurance Inspection
- LGBT North East Award for 'Building Inclusive Workplaces'
- Achievement of 37th place (of 400) in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and are ranked the second top emergency service
- Department of Work and Pensions 'Two Ticks' disability symbol
- Prince's Trust Team Programme – North East Award Winners.

HOW WE MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

We believe that this Annual Report and Statement of Assurance, along with other documents referred to and signposted within it, demonstrates how TWFRA meets the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework. These are summarised below.

Requirement	How this is met
Produce an IRMP that identifies and assesses all foreseeable risk The Plan must demonstrate how prevention, protection and response will be used to mitigate the impact of risk	• Strategic Community Safety Plan and IRMP • Community Risk Profile • Policies and procedures to implement Plan, including targeting • Specific IRMP reviews including evidence base • Detailed risk data used in decision making e.g. FSEC, Workload Modelling, MOSAIC • Community Engagement Strategy • Monitoring of performance by Performance Action Group and Policy and Performance Committee to ensure risk is being mitigated
Work with communities to identify and protect them from risk	
IRMP should set out the management strategy and risk based programme for enforcing the Regulatory Reform order	
Make provision to respond to incidents and reflect this in IRMPs	
(Accountability) IRMP must be accessible, available, reflect consultation, cover a three year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as necessary; reflect up to date risk analysis and evaluation of community outcomes	
Have effective business continuity arrangements	• ISO22301 accreditation
Collaborate with other FRAs, other emergency services and LRFs to deliver interoperability	• Mutual aid agreements • Local Resilience Forum structures, roles, plans, procedures, exercising records etc. • Common systems for Command and Control with

Requirement	How this is met
	Northumberland FRA • Further collaboration with Northumbria Police is currently in progress
Engage with the Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board (SRB) to support discussions and decision making on national resilience	• Policies and procedures relating to local and national risks • Engagement in Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) groups relating to resilience
Risk assessments must include analysis of any gaps between existing capability and that needed for national resilience, and these must be highlighted to the SRB	
(Assurance) Work collectively and with Strategic Resilience Board to provide assurance that risks are assessed, gaps identified and that resilience capabilities are fit for purpose, and any new capabilities are procured, maintained and managed in the most cost effective manner	• As above plus independent assessment via National Resilience Advisory Team (NRAT) audits • External audit of financial systems and value for money
Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally	• Strategic Community Safety Plan and IRMP • Policies and procedures to implement Plan, including targeting • Delivery coterminous with Council boundaries • Engagement in statutory and non-statutory partnerships (Partnerships Register, reports and structures of partnership bodies)

Requirement	How this is met
(Scrutiny) FRAs must hold the Chief Fire Officer to account and have arrangements in place to ensure their decisions are open to scrutiny	• Corporate Governance Framework • Standing Order • Annual review of Governance • Authority minutes
FRAs must make their communities aware of how they can access data and information on performance	• Annual Report and Statement of Assurance • Quarterly performance reports • Compliance with the data transparency code as exemplified on website • Policies and procedures relating to data
Prepare an annual statement of assurance covering financial, governance and operational matters showing due regard for IRMP and Fire and Rescue National Framework	• Annual Report and Statement of Assurance • Documents signposted from it including Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement, reports of internal and external auditors

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority is the local government organisation created under the Local Government Act 1985 to oversee the activities of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).

It has statutory responsibilities laid down in legislation including the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Local Government Act 1999, Localism Act 2011 and the Fire and rescue National Framework for England 2012, to provide an effective, economic and efficient fire and rescue service.

The Authority comprises 16 elected members, nominated by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear.

Insert 'family tree' of Fire Authority

To enable us to carry out our duties effectively, we have a number of committees:

- Human Resources Committee
- Policy and Performance Committee
- Governance Committee
- Appointments Committee
- Disciplinary Appeals Committee
- Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee
- Emergency Sub-Committee

The roles and responsibilities of all Members and Officers are clearly defined and documented, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication:

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place and these set out how the Authority operates and how decisions are made, including a clear Delegation Scheme.

- The Standing Orders and Delegation Scheme indicates responsibilities for functions and sets out how decisions are made.

- A system of scrutiny is in place whereby the Governance Committee provides independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial position to the extent that it affects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and the Policy and Performance Committee scrutinises performance information in respect of the Authority's duty to secure best value and to consider policy initiatives in respect of emerging issues.

For further information regarding Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority, please visit our website: www.twfire.gov.uk.

Corporate Governance Framework

We have a Corporate Governance Framework in place which aims to ensure we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

We are responsible for ensuring that we conduct our business in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used appropriately.

We have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way we function, with particular regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of this liability, we are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of our affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of our functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

The Corporate Governance Framework primarily includes systems and processes which we use to direct and control our activities and engagement with the community. It also enables us to monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and to consider whether these objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

We adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance in 2003 which was revised and updated 2010 and is reviewed annually. The Code ensures that we comply with recommended practice and maintain high standards of conduct.

Any breaches of the Code are reported to the Authority's Monitoring Officer who will determine whether the complaint should be investigated and if so by whom.

The framework is based upon the following six core principles:

- Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

- Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

- Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Our Corporate Governance arrangements were subject of an efficiency review during 2013/14 aimed at making improvements to the Framework and streamline management processes to ensure these are fit for purpose and appropriate for the changing needs of our organisation. Revised ways of working were partially implemented in 2014/15 and will be fully embedded for 2015/16.

Review of Effectiveness

We are responsible for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by feedback from Members and the work of all senior managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

Our Annual Governance Statement 2014/15 based on the annual review of effectiveness, was agreed by the Fire Authority on 29th June 2015. The papers include:

- Annual Governance Review report
- Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Annual Governance Statement 2014/15
- Action plan

These documents can be found on our website www.twfire.gov.uk.

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority adheres to the Department for Communities and Local Government's 'Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity'.

The code became effective in March 2011 and provides guidance on the content, style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity.

In 2014 compliance with the code became statutory as part of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's communications strategies and policies abide by the code.

MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE RISK

TWFRS policy on risk management is to ensure the successful delivery of our corporate goals through the effective management of threats by identifying, prioritising, controlling and monitoring threats to ensure they are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.

The key objectives that underpin our risk management policy are to:

- Develop, implement and review our risk management framework and process
- Promote effective risk management at all levels of the organisation
- Encourage an appropriate risk culture and develop resources for risk management within TWFRS e.g. training and education
- Co-ordinate other departments that are involved in specific aspects of risk management and manage responses where risks impact on more than one area, e.g. security, business continuity, health and safety
- Report, escalate and communicate risk management issues to key stakeholders
- Provide assurance regarding risk management within TWFRS
- Take advantage of opportunities
- Anticipate changing social, environmental and legislative requirements.

The Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) is essential to the effectiveness of the risk management process. The group is chaired by the Chair of the Fire Authority and comprises of senior managers from each of the Authority's functions. The group develop strategy to manage those issues raised in the Corporate Risk Profile and develop, implement, monitor and review action plans to minimise corporate strategic risks.

At the time of publication of the Annual Report, the high priority corporate risks were:

- Failure to effectively and safely deploy and manage operational staff and resources at incidents leading to staff and public being exposed to unnecessary risks

- Risk that spending and / or policy decisions of one of our partners has a negative impact on our collaborative work and therefore a detrimental impact on the communities that we serve

- Industrial unrest nationally and / or locally with regard to conditions of service (including ongoing organisational change management programmes) results in industrial action and impacts on service delivery

- Risk that further budget cuts will mean that we have to make decisions that will detrimentally affect the delivery of front line services from 2015/16.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE

The Service's Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements have attained accreditation to the International Standard, ISO22301:2012 for Business Continuity. The Service received confirmation of certification in February 2015 following independent verification by the British Standards Institute (BSI).

The independent assessment confirmed the adequacy and effectiveness of controls applied to our operational activities, along with the effective implementation of risk reduction, safeguarding the interests of our stakeholders.

Throughout the assessment, the Service demonstrated that we have the necessary resilience to deal with periods of disruption to our normal operations. It was also recognised that lessons learnt through experience and planned exercising were incorporated into the BCM system ensuring we are better prepared for future disruptions.

We are actively engaged with the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (NLRF) and work collaboratively with our partners on various areas of business continuity planning, e.g. National Fuel Shortages, Pandemic Influenza, Severe Weather etc.

Local resilience planning is also supported by the Government's National Resilience Programme via the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT). This has enabled us to take an active role in national resilience exercise planning, be well informed and to be able to share and collaborate on National Resilience issues.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Finance Officer's Statement

This summarised version of our Statement of Accounts aims to provide easy to understand information, focusing on the key points arising from our stewardship of public funds in 2014/15. The figures in this summary have been prepared with regard to proper accounting practice.

Revenue finances

The revenue budget for 2014/15 was set at £51.858m. The actual expenditure incurred was £51.838m. The revenue account for 2014/15, below, shows the net cost of running the Authority's services during the year, and how these were funded.

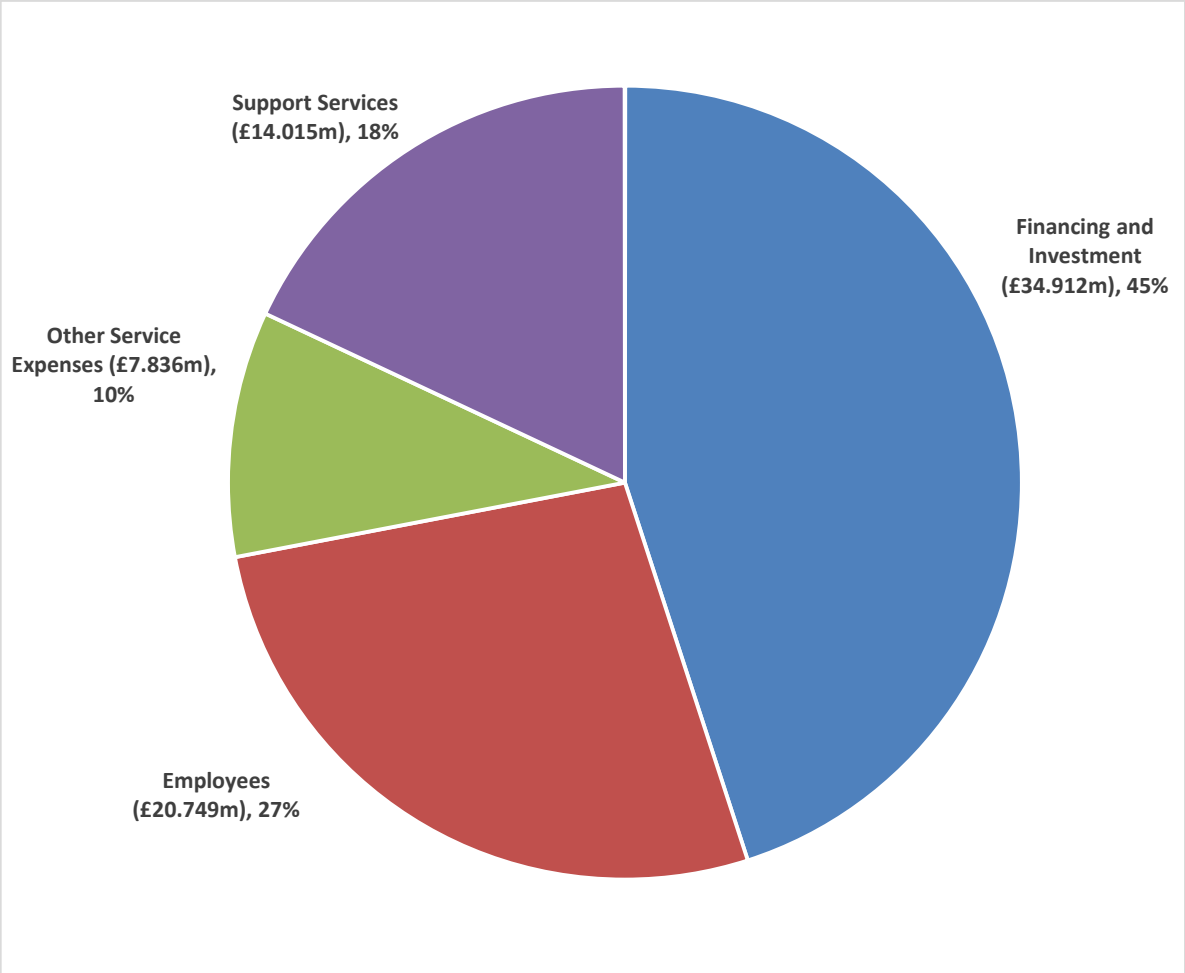
	Net Expenditure
	£'000
Community Safety	5,604
Fire Fighting and Rescue Operations	27,828
Corporate and Democratic Core	242
Non distributed costs	452
Exceptional Items	2,753
Net Cost of Services	**36,879**
Other Operating Income and Expenditure	34,718
Net Operating Expenditure	**71,597**
Financed by:	
Revenue Support Grant & General Grants	(17,816)
Top Up Grant	(9,793)
Business Rates& Collection Fund	(4,208)
Council Tax Precepts & Collection Fund	(20,032)
Income and Expenditure Account (Surplus) / Deficit	**19,748**
Capital Financing	1,253
Net transfer to/(from) Reserves	(21,012)
Movement in General Fund balance in the year	**(11)**
General Reserve balance at start of year	(3,871)
General Fund balance carried forward	**(3,882)**

The net operating expenditure of £71.597m includes £32.250m in respect of pension interest costs and the expected return on pension assets required to account for pension costs under the International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS19).

The net transfer to / from Reserves includes an appropriation of £18.730m from the IAS19 Pension Reserve.

WHERE THE MONEY WAS SPENT

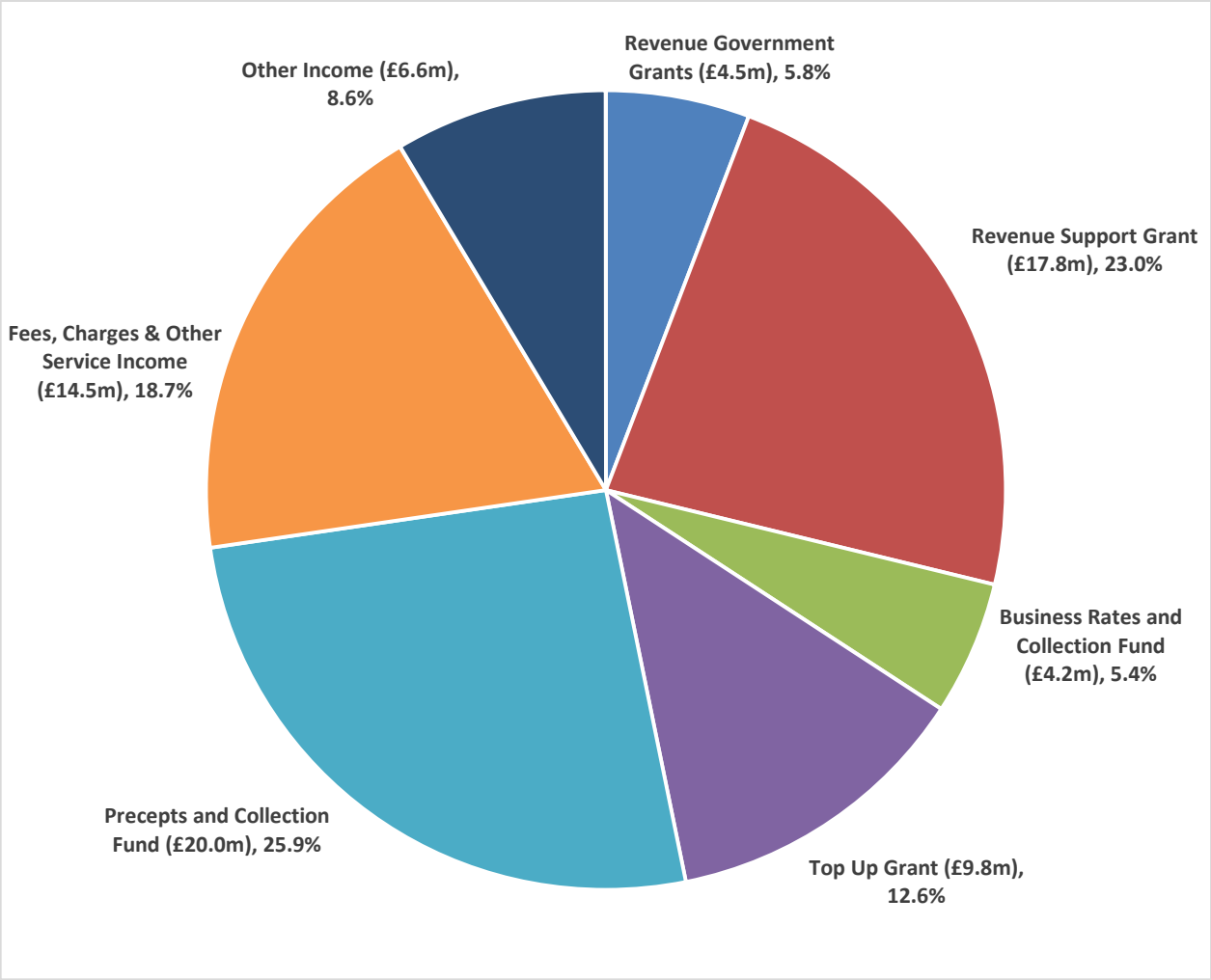
The Authority's gross expenditure was £77.512m.* The chart below shows where the money was spent.



*The Gross Expenditure figure excludes the "Exceptional Items" included in the net expenditure table on the previous page

WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM

The expenditure was financed from the following sources:



SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET

The Summary Balance Sheet shows what the Authority owes and is owed, representing the monetary value of the Authority as at 31st March 2015.

	£'000
Buildings, land and other assets owned by the Authority	65,671
Short-term investments	38,471
Money owed to the Authority - (debtors)	9,749
Money owed by the Authority - (creditors / borrowing)*	(841,338)
Provisions	(2,209)
	(729,656)
Financed by:	
Revaluation reserve and capital adjustment account	28,126
Usable capital receipts	3,285
Pension reserve	(792,000)
General fund balance	3,882
Earmarked reserves	27,073
Other unusable reserves	(22)
	(729,656)

***** The statutory accounting requirements require the total value of pension liabilities in place at the Balance Sheet date to be included in the Authority's accounts, but this takes no account that the liability is to be addressed over a 25 year period.

CAPITAL FINANCES

The Authority spent £3.601m on capital schemes during 2014/15. The main schemes were:

	£'000
Property Related Schemes	3,142
Equipment - Operational and Information Technology	402
Vehicles	57

The 2014/15 programme was financed as follows:

	£'000
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	191
Grants/Capital Contribution	1,194
Earmarked Reserves	2,216

AUDITORS FINDINGS

This information will not be available until September 2015. Once received it will also need to be presented to FA prior to inclusion in the ARSOA. At this time, the information in this section can be updated to reflect 2014/15

Description	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Annual Accounts submitted for audit on time	✓	✓	✓
Number of audit qualifications*	0	0	0

* An unqualified opinion by the Authority's external auditors means that in the auditor's opinion, the accounts presented fairly the financial position of the Authority

The external Auditors presented their Annual Audit Letter for the year 2013/14 to the Fire Authority on 17 November 2014 and this is available on our website. The letter concluded that we managed our financial position well. Budget setting was robust and close monitoring ensured delivery of spending within budget.

The Auditors also acknowledged that the Authority is financially resilient. The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out how the Authority proposes to deal with the difficult economic climate and funding cuts. The earmarked reserves set aside for specific plans and projects will help the Authority to manage the financial challenges over the next few years.

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Financial Planning

Our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides an analysis of the financial position likely to face the Authority over the next three years. It establishes approaches which direct resources to address the strategic priorities of the Authority (as set out in the Strategic Community Safety Plan), achieve value for money in the use of those resources, and assist the budget planning framework for the preparation of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

Efficiency

We produce an IRMP which reflects local needs and sets out plans to effectively tackle existing and potential risks to communities. The IRMP has been brought in line with the MTFS to cover the comprehensive spending review period. This process enables required reductions in expenditure to be delivered in a way which takes full account of community risk.

We are committed to delivering further efficiency savings through:

- further development of the IRMP
- following best practice in relation to procurement of goods and services
- working in collaboration with partners both locally and regionally, and
- generating efficiency savings arising from policy and service reviews.

During 2014/15 service reviews have resulted in savings of £1.279m which have been reflected in the 2015/16 Revenue budget. This has enabled us to meet our stretching targets in light of reductions in government funding. Further savings from IRMP will be made to help address the funding gap already identified for 2016/17 and beyond.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

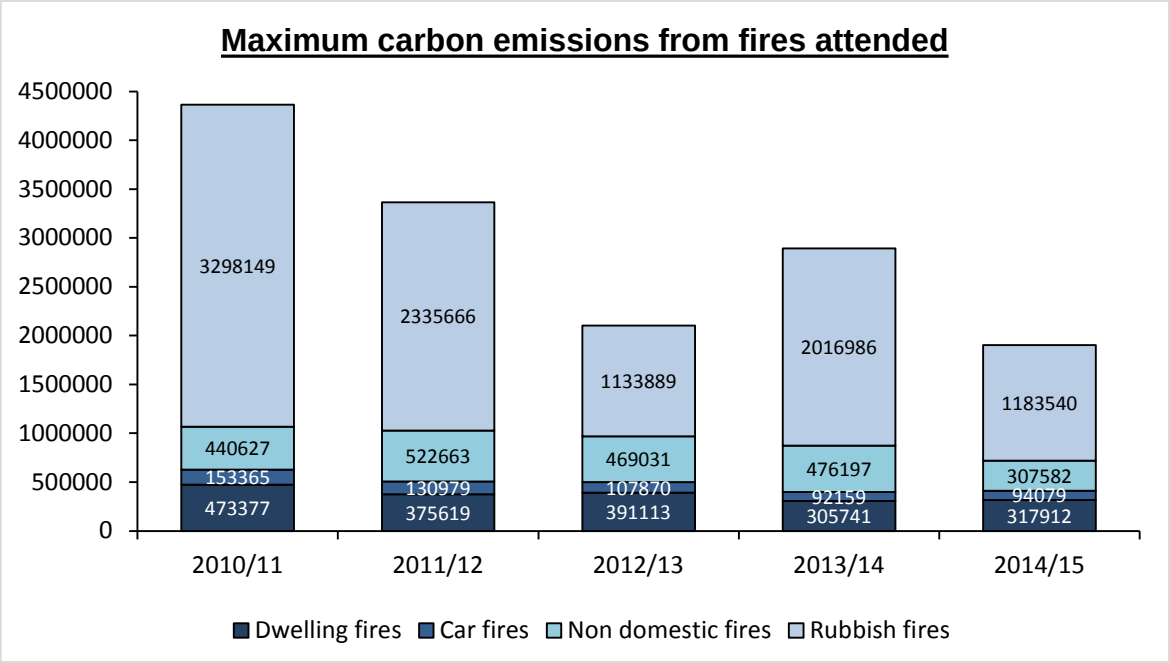
TWFRS has made significant progress in reducing our carbon emissions in support of the Governments climate change objective. We have assessed and invested in a number of initiatives in supporting such objectives. Over the period of the last three years we have invested in LED lighting to all external areas and we are mid-way through a programme of replacement of internal lighting across the fuller estate. The continued use of LED lighting will significantly reduce the number of units required to light an area, the energy they use and the cost of future maintenance. We have also replaced a number of our existing boiler and plant room systems to more efficient equipment that costs less to operate and in turn saves on running costs too.

In our very latest new flagship Community Fire Station at Marley Park, Sunderland (opening Summer 2015), we have installed a number of environmental measures into the new facility including new solar photo voltaic cells (mounted on the roof), the harvesting and re-use of rain water, passive infrared lighting systems, use of the very latest building energy management system controllers and also the maximisation of natural lighting and ventilation with increased levels of glazing throughout.

Following a significant review and associated vehicle testing together with evaluation, we are set to purchase an electric vehicle to operate between our sites and the associated infrastructure for charging at a number of our sites. We hope to have this in place in before the winter this year.

We continue to recognise the impact of our actions during the incidents we attend and how this can have an effect on the environment; these impacts can result from both the effects of fires and the run off from the water we use to extinguish them. As a result of our work in reducing the number of fires we attend by preventative work, we have also been able to reduce the amount of CO2 emissions released into the atmosphere.

The following graph shows the carbon emissions in tonnes for fire incidents we have attended between 2010/11 and 2014/15



Please note the emissions are **maximum** emissions based on the **maximum possible** area covered by the fire.

In 2014/15 there was a decrease of 35% in the carbon emitted from non domestic fires (excluding derelict property) and a 41% decrease from rubbish fires. There was a 4% increase in the carbon emitted from dwelling fires (excluding derelict property) and a 2% increase in carbon emitted from car fires (excluding derelict vehicles). However the total carbon emissions from all fires has reduced by 34% compared to the previous year

YOUR VIEWS COUNT

Your views are very important to us and having had the opportunity to read our Annual Report, we would welcome any comments that you may have. This would assist in our consultation process and evaluation of the document.

You can find our questionnaire by following this link: http://www.twfire.gov.uk/about/annual-report

All questionnaires requesting feedback will be acknowledged within ten days of receipt.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

We aim to provide the highest standards of fire, rescue and community safety services. As a recipient of a public service, there may be times when you wish to comment on the fire and rescue service. We encourage complaints and compliments from all members of the community as we value your opinion and it can help us to continually improve our service.

Complaints Procedure

For our part, if you do make a complaint we will ensure that:

- your complaint is treated confidentially
- you receive an acknowledgement within 7 working days, including the name of the Investigating Officer
- your complaint is investigated in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Service's standard procedures.

We will also:

- endeavour to send you a full reply including the results of the investigation within 28 working days
- ensure that you are informed of the progress, if the above deadline cannot be met.

Making a Complaint or Compliment

If you wish to make a complaint or would like to tell us about an area of our work that you have been happy with then please do contact us, details are as follows:
Telephone: +44 (0)191 444 1500.
Complete an online form via our website www.twfire.gov.uk

In writing, address your letter to: The Chief Fire Officer and send to the address detailed on the following page.

Strategic Planning and Corporate Communications Team
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Nissan Way
Barmston Mere
Sunderland
SR5 3QY

Telephone 0191 4441599
Fax 0191 4441512
e-mail comments@twfire.gov.uk
Internet http://www.twfire.gov.uk/

Alternative Formats

We understand that people have different needs. This plan is available in alternative formats upon request. For further details contact 0191 444 1500.