TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY **Item No 5**

MEETING: 10 DECEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: INCIDENT RESPONSE STANDARDS

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) THE STRATEGIC FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information regarding potential incident response standards and illustrates examples of standards employed in other fire and rescue services. The report seeks the approval to set initial incident response standards for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Authority's strategy has been to respond as quickly as possible to incidents whilst prioritising those where there is a higher risk to life and property. Our current strategy is:

> *'We aim to respond to emergency incidents as quickly as possible, prioritising our response to incidents where there is significant risk to life and property'*

2.2 Members will recall previously reported performance information that identified the average time taken for the first fire engine to arrive at risk level 1 incidents (those consider to involve very significant life and property risk) during 2017/18 was 5 minutes and 12 seconds. This time, recorded from the fire engine mobilising to the time it arrives at the incident, is the 'attendance time'. This strategy included that attendance time to lower risk incidents (for example to risk level 4 incidents) would be slower in order to protect the availability of fire engines for risk level 1 incidents.

3 TOTAL RESPONSE TIME

3.1 When a caller dials 999, they are connected to BT operator who directs the call to the relevant emergency service. On the subsequent receipt of that emergency call by our mobilising control room, details such as the caller, incident and its location are taken then entered into our mobilising system. Depending on the information provided an appropriate pre-determined

attendance (allocation of type and number of fire engines initially responding) is proposed by the mobilising system. The mobilising control staff then select the appropriate pre-determined attendance resources and an alert is transmitted to the relevant resources, be they on a fire station or mobile within the community. The alert is the acknowledged by each fire engine that then proceeds to the incident.

3.2 As reported separately, our mobilising system is currently being updated as part of a mid-contract technical refresh. This update may also allow the time between answering the emergency call and time fire engines are alerted to be reduced. Once installed, further work is planned to implement this update with the ultimate aim of improving the total incident response time, including call handling.

3.3 Annual performance reported to Home Office includes this total response time.

4 INITIAL INCIDENT RESPONSE STANDARDS

4.1 Almost all fire and rescue authorities set response standards that are claimed to provide a definable standard against which authorities can measure service performance. Additionally, a response standard is considered to allow communities to be consulted more directly regarding their expectations from fire and rescue services. As part of the consultation being undertaken regarding the IRMP review of how we respond relative to risk the public, workforce and key stakeholders are being asked if they think it is reasonable to set such standards.

4.2 Critics of the response standard approach argue that setting of standards, often based on percentages of historical performance, are a vehicle to allow authorities to reduce standards in a planned way over time.

4.3 Further detail of some incident response standards set by other metropolitan authorities are contained in appendix A to this report.

4.4 The bullet points below set out an initial set of call handling and attendance time standards for consideration by members. These standards include performance targets that should be included in formal reporting using the Authority's normal processes. Standards have be set using data collected during the IRMP review of how we respond relative to risk and are based upon actual performance during 2017/18.

4.5 It is proposed to trial the use of these initial standards for one year, commencing April 2019 that would facilitate the development of final standards set for full adoption in 2020.

4.6 The proposed standards would be:

- to answer 96 per cent of 999 calls within 7 seconds

- to dispatch resources to emergency incidents within an average 1 minute of answering the call

- for the first fire engine to arrive within an average of 6 minutes from being dispatched to risk level 1 incidents

- for the second fire engine (if required) to arrive within an average of 8 minutes from being dispatched to risk level 1 incidents

- for the first fire engine to arrive at an incident in Tyne and Wear where there is significant risk to life and property within 8 minutes in more than 90 per cent of occasions.

- for the first fire engine to arrive at an incident in Tyne and Wear where there is significant risk to life and property within 10 minutes in more than 95 per cent of occasions

4.7 In addition to these standards our aspiration would remain to respond to emergency incidents as quickly as possible, prioritising our response to incidents where there is significant risk to life and property

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control, the realisation of efficiencies, the most appropriate use of limited resources and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report. Comment about global availability versus risk based availability (target those most at need).

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

a) Note the content of this report.

b) Approve the use of the initial incident response standards as set out in 4.6 for 2019/20 to allow the monitoring the impact prior to formal adoption of this approach.

c) Receive further reports as necessary.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

APPENDIX A

West Midlands Fire Service

Risk Based Attendance Standard

Extract from West Midlands Fire Service website[1]

We group all high risk incidents together and ensure that we always respond in the fastest way possible to a call that could result in people's lives or property being in danger. The focus on risk means that we can afford to set longer attendance time standards for minor calls where lives and property are known to be in no danger. By doing this, we can spread our resources most effectively across the West Midlands area, not just day by day, but dynamically from one minute to the next, using Fire Control staff to maintain the most effective distribution of resources at all times. Protocols are in place, so that however many personnel are committed to fires and emergencies at a given time, we are able to make cover moves based on a combination of the level of risk identified in each area of the West Midlands and the anticipated travel times as our resources become stretched, during periods of high demand.

Emergency incidents are categorised in the following way:

Incident Risk Category	Description	First Appliance Attendance Standard
Category 1 (High Risk)	Incidents that present the most significant risk to life, namely dwelling fires, other building fires, RTCs and 'Life Risk' Special Service Calls, such as water rescue.	5 minutes
Category 2 (Medium Risk)	Incidents where there is a potential risk (either through incident severity or the type of property affected), but there is a reduced likelihood of this risk being realised. For example- a flooding or a person locked in.	7 minutes
Category 3 (Low Risk)	Incidents where there is a significantly reduced risk to life.	10 minutes
Category 4 (secondary fires that attract a 20 minute attendance standard)	Incidents that are secondary fires and where there is a very low risk to life; e.g. fires in the open, in waste materials or grass fires	20 minutes

[1] https://www.wmfs.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Risk-Based-Attendance-Standard.pdf

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Extract from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2020 Supporting Information[2]

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 empowered local fire and rescue services to set their own response times. In our previous Corporate Plan (2012-15) we introduced response standards aligned to the risk category of each ward. Following a move from modelling risk at a ward level to LSOA level, we have aligned our response standards accordingly.

It is important to state that we always aim to respond to an incident in the shortest time possible and in as safe a manner as possible. The actual time taken to respond to incidents (from receipt of information by the fire crew to arrival at the incident) is most often quicker than the maximum limit we have prescribed.

LSOA Risk	Response Time
Risk Category 1	Less than 5 minutes
Risk Category 2	Less than 7 minutes
Risk Category 3	Less than 12 minutes
Risk Category 4	Less than 17 minutes

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Extract from MFRS Service Delivery Plan 2017-18[3]

Objective 2:
To achieve an appropriate speed and weight of attack in emergency response to fires and road traffic collisions.

Action: *To analyse our performance against our emergency response standards and introduce standards and measures as necessary to improve performance.*

Target: *To achieve a 90% attainment level against our response standards for fires and road traffic collisions.*

2016/17 update – On average the first appliance attending life risk emergency incidents is on scene within 10 minutes on 95.8% of occasions despite reducing the number of fire appliances from 42 to 26 over the last few years.

[2] https://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/media/3430/irmp-supporting-documentation-2016-20.pdf
[3] https://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/service_delivery/pdf/Service_Delivery_Plan_2017-18.pdf

London Fire Brigade

Extract from London Fire Brigade – Fire Facts Incident response times 2017[4]

Our response standards

So we can see how well we are performing, we set standards for various parts of the process for getting resources to emergency incidents. The current standards were confirmed or put in place by the London Safety Plan 2017 (LSP2017) which was the subject of public consultation during 2016, and was approved in March 2017.

These indicators start at the time the emergency 999 call is answered by LFB Control to the arrival of a fire engine with crew at the incident scene.

Our response time targets for 2017were:
*(a) answer 999 calls within an average of **1.4 seconds***
*(b) answer 92per cent of 999 calls within **seven seconds***
*(c) dispatch a fire engine to emergency incidents within an average **1mins40 secs** of answering the call*
*(d) for the first fire engine to arrive within an average of **six mins** from being dispatched*
*(e) for the second fire engine (if required) to arrive within an average of **eight mins** from being dispatched*
*(f) for first fire engine to arrive within **12mins**in more than 95per cent of occasions.*
(g) for a first fire engine to arrive with 10mins in more than 90per cent of occasions.

[4] https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/3114/fire-facts-incident-response-times-2017-final.pdf